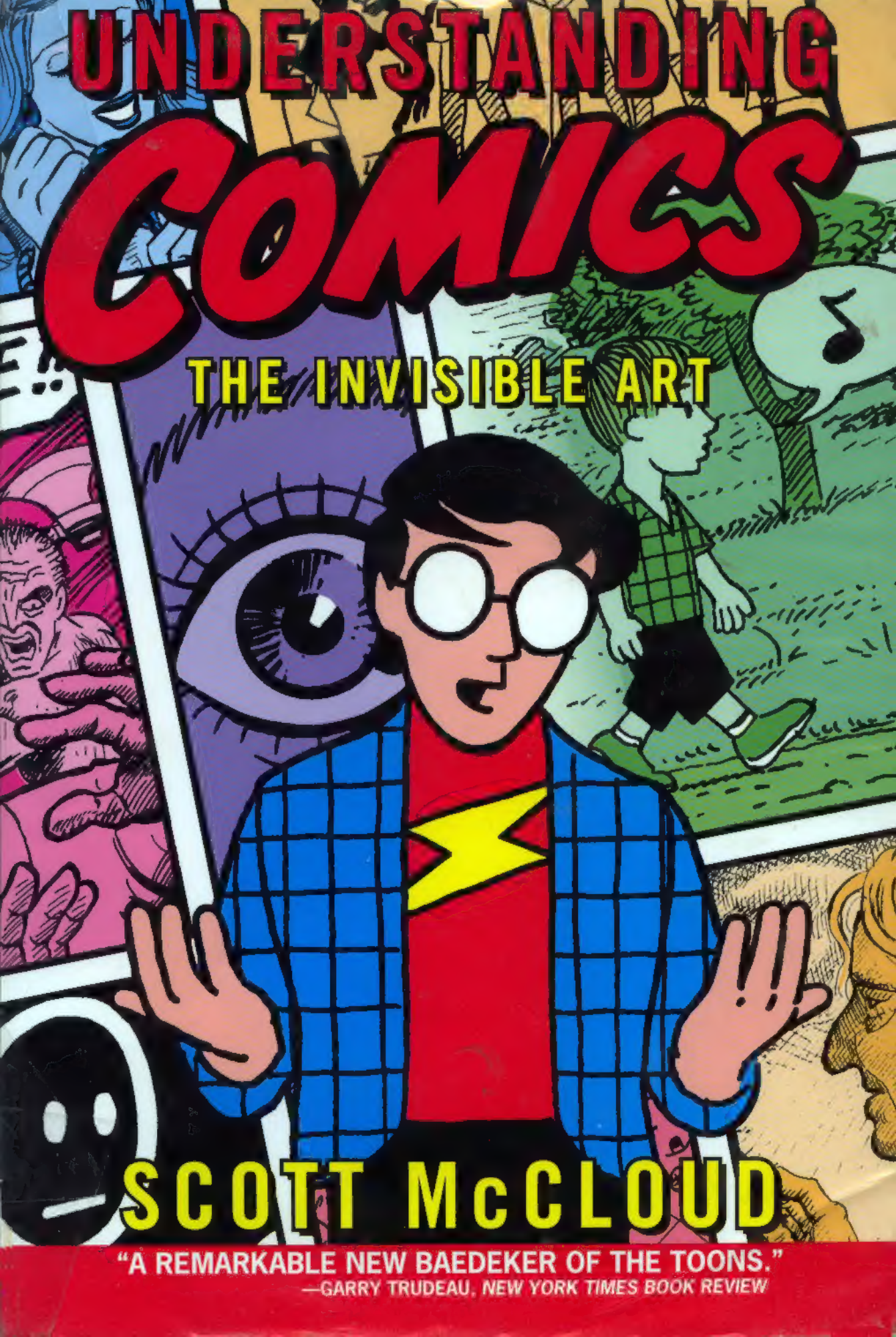
UNDERSTANDING
COMICS
THE INVISIBLE ART
SCOTT McCLOUD
"A REMARKABLE NEW BAEDEKER OF THE TOONS."
—GARRY TRUDEAU, NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

A Kitchen Sink Book for
HarperPerennial
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WRITING AND ART
**SCOTT McCLOUD**

LETTERING
**BOB LAPPAN**

EDITORIAL ADVICE AND
SELECTIVE EGO-TRIMMING
**STEVE BISSETTE**
**KURT BUSIEK**
**NEIL GAIMAN**
**BOB LAPPAN**
**JENNIFER LEE**
**LARRY MARDER**
**IVY RATAFIA**

EXTRA SPECIAL THANKS
**WILL EISNER**

EDITOR
**MARK MARTIN**

A paperback edition of this book was originally published in 1993 by Kitchen Sink Press. It is here reprinted by arrangement with Kitchen Sink Press.

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First HarperPerennial edition published 1994.

ISBN 0-06-097625-X (pbk.)

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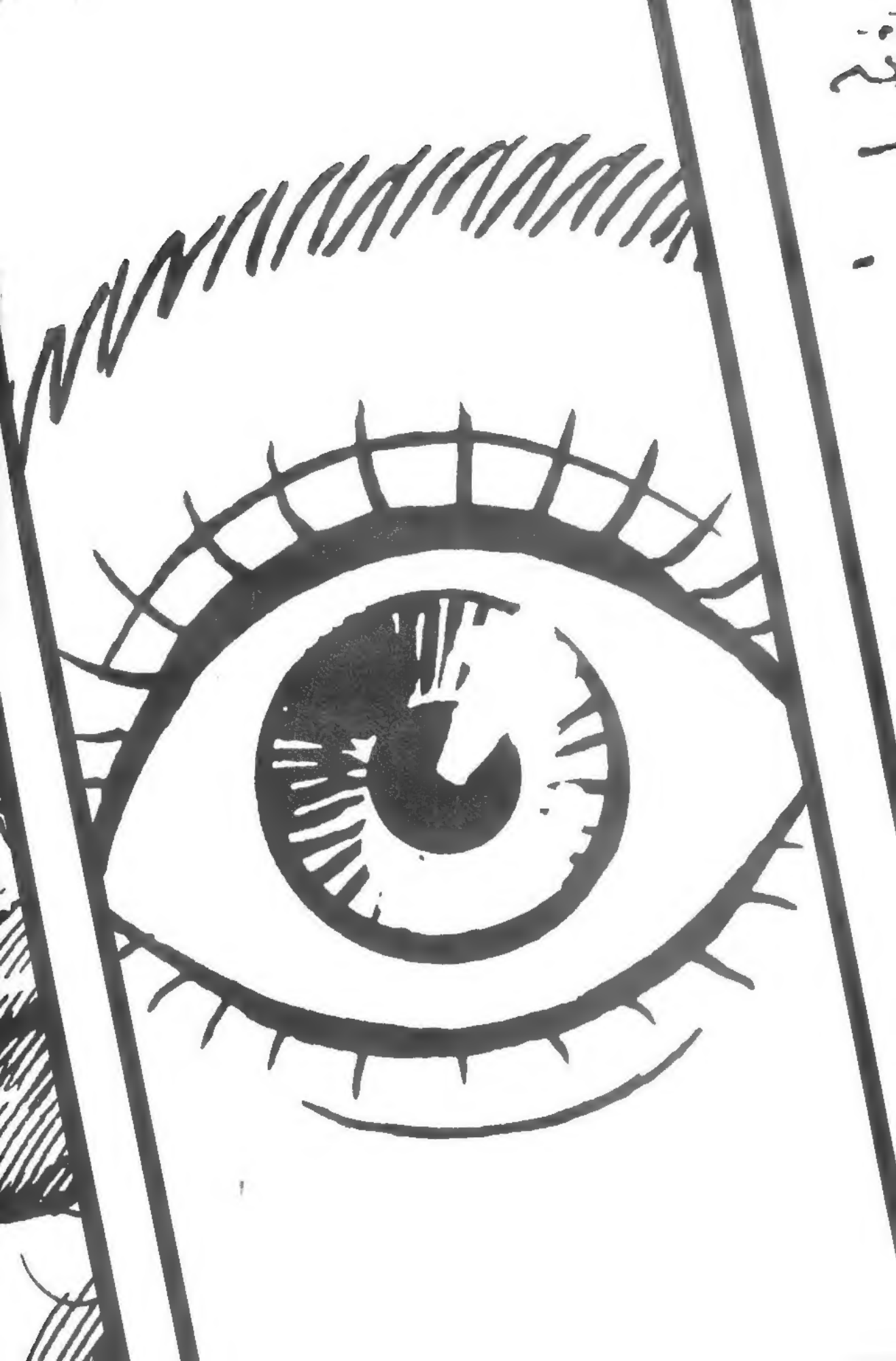


**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

The book you're about to read took 15 months to produce and many of the ideas it contains had been on the back-burner for over nine years, so acknowledging all of those who have helped in its development may be next to impossible. Furthermore, since its initial publication in the comics industry, I've received tremendous support from hundreds of fellow travelers in all corners of the publishing world. My apologies to anyone who is not listed below and should have been.

My deepest gratitude to Steve Bissette, Kurt Busiek, Neil Gaiman, Larry Marder and Ivy Ratafia who all reviewed my original draft in detail and offered many valuable critiques. Their contribution to the project cannot be overstated. I was also fortunate to receive detailed analysis from the talented Jennifer Lee and beyond-the-call-of-duty proofreading and good advice from Bob Lappan. Special thanks are also due to the magnificent (and magnanimous) Will Eisner who offered many words of encouragement and excellent advice in the project's later stages. Will Eisner's work has been an inspiration to me, and to thousands of artists, for many years. Eisner's COMICS AND SEQUENTIAL ART was the first book to examine the art-form of comics. Here's the second. I couldn't have done it without you, Will. Thanks.

I'm deeply indebted to all of the friends and family who offered their thoughts on the manuscript as it was being prepared. Among this long list are Holly Ratafia, Alice Harrigan, Carol Ratafia, Barry Deutsch, Kip Manley, Amy Sacks, Caroline Woolf, Clarence Cummins, Karl Zimmerman, Catherine Bell, Adam Philips and the legendary Dewan Brothers, Ted and Brian.

In the comics world, special thanks go to Richard Howell, Mike Luce, Dave McKean, Rick Veitch, Don Simpson, Mike Bannon (technical support), Jim Woodring, and all of the wonderful clan at San Diego '92. Thanks also to the numerous professionals who have lent their support and endorsements to the project. I'm particularly indebted to Jim Valentino, Dave Sim and Keith Giffen who used their own books as a forum on my behalf. In the retail sector, my thanks to the generous members of the Direct Line Group, to the many stores which played host during our first tour and especially to the Mighty Moondog himself, Gary Colobuono. Thanks, as always, to Larry Marder, Nexus of All Comic Book Realities, for his tireless efforts on my behalf.

Thank you to the legion of journalists in print, radio and television who have been able to talk about this book without quoting sound effects from the old Batman TV show; especially Calvin Reid and the whole gang at PW.

Early influences on the ideas in this book are harder to trace, but no less important. Kurt Busiek introduced me to comics long ago and was my best guide for many years. Eclipse Editor-in-Chief cat yronwode helped shape my critical faculties over seven years on ZOT! and is one of the very few people in comics who really understood where I was coming from. Art Spiegelman, like Eisner, offered me a role-model for serious inquiry into comics as an art-form and, in his short comics-essay "Cracking Jokes," clarified comics' potential for non-fiction and made this book a possibility. Other important early influences include Syracuse professor Larry Bakke, Richard Howell and Carol Kalish.

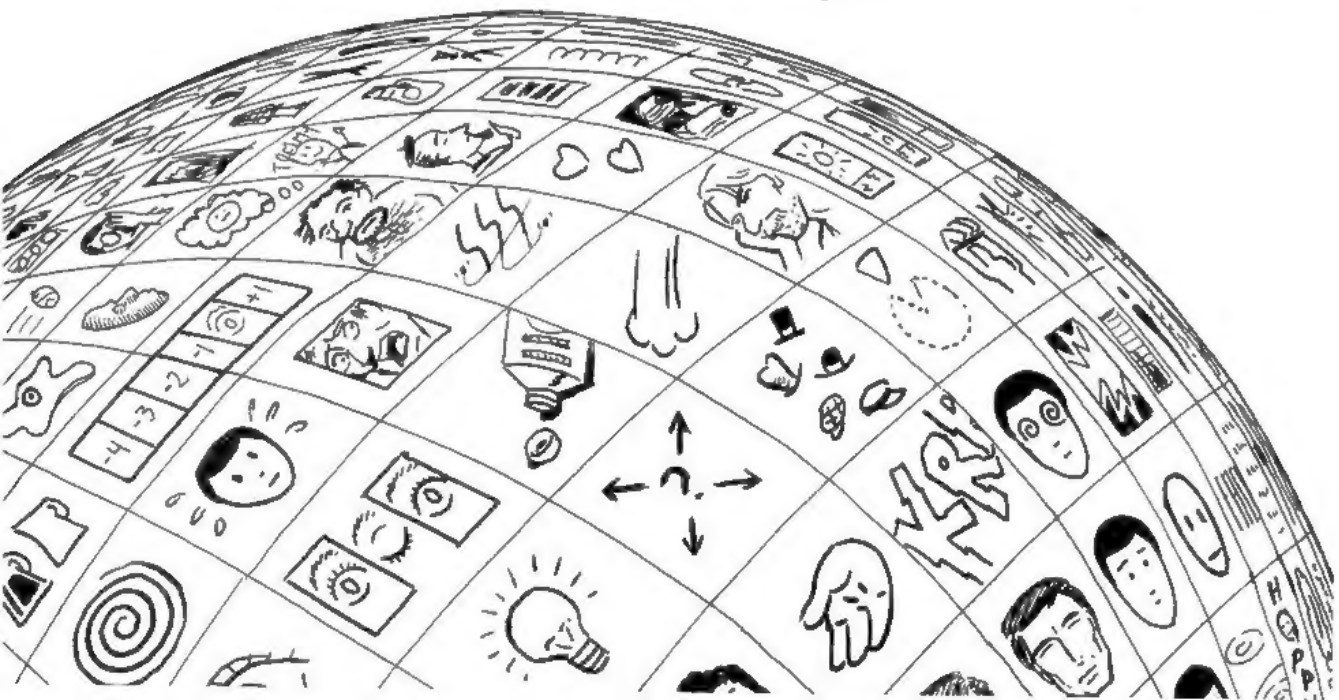
My thanks to all the fine people at Tundra Publishing, Kitchen Sink Press and HarperCollins.

Without Kevin Eastman this book might have never seen the light of day. Thank you, Kevin.

Without Ian Ballantine, you wouldn't be holding it in your hands today. Thank you, Ian.

And without you, Ivy, it wouldn't have been much fun. I love you madly. Let's take tomorrow off.

Scott McCloud



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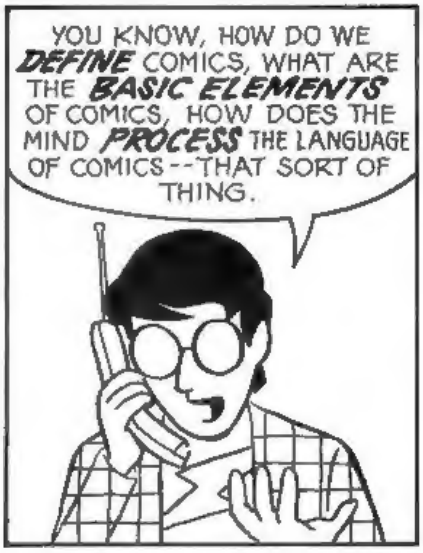
# INTRODUCTION

NOT EXACTLY, NO... ALTHOUGH THERE IS SOME HISTORY IN IT... IT'S MORE AN EXAMINATION OF THE ART-FORM OF COMICS, WHAT IT'S CAPABLE OF, HOW IT WORKS.


YOU KNOW, HOW DO WE DEFINE COMICS, WHAT ARE THE BASIC ELEMENTS OF COMICS, HOW DOES THE MIND PROCESS THE LANGUAGE OF COMICS--THAT SORT OF THING.

I HAVE A CHAPTER ON CLOSURE--ALL ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS BETWEEN THE PANELS, THERE'S ONE ON HOW TIME FLOWS THROUGH COMICS, ANOTHER ON THE INTERACTION OF WORDS AND PICTURES AND STORYTELLING.

I EVEN PUT TOGETHER A NEW COMPREHENSIVE THEORY OF THE CREATIVE PROCESS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR COMICS AND FOR ART IN GENERAL?!

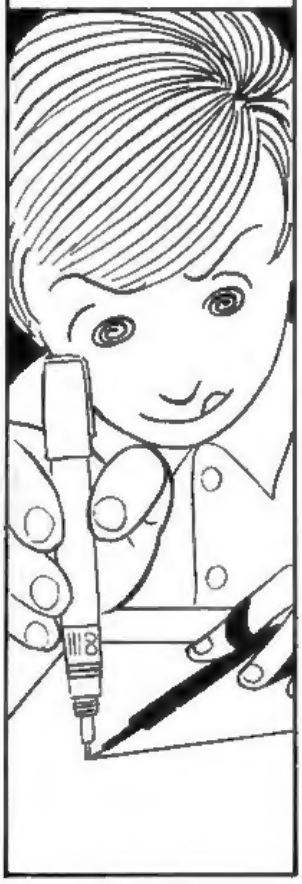
# UNDERSTANDING COMICS

CHAPTER ONE

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT.

BUT WHEN I WAS IN 8th GRADE, A FRIEND OF MINE (WHO WAS A LOT SMARTER THAN I WAS) CONVINCED ME TO GIVE COMICS ANOTHER LOOK AND LENT ME HIS COLLECTION.
SOON, I WAS HOOKED!
THE REALLY OLD MEN
BY STAN & JACK

IN LESS THAN A *YEAR*, I BECAME *TOTALLY OBSESSED* WITH COMICS! I DECIDED TO BECOME A *COMICS ARTIST* IN *10th GRADE* AND BEGAN TO *PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!*



I FELT THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING *LURKING* IN COMICS... SOMETHING THAT HAD *NEVER BEEN DONE.*

SOME KIND OF *HIDDEN POWER!*

BUT WHENEVER I TRIED TO *EXPLAIN* MY FEELING, I FAILED *MISERABLY.*

*COMIC BOOKS?!* HA! HA! HA!

BUT IT-- BUT IT'S-- BUH...

*SURE*, I REALIZED THAT COMIC BOOKS WERE USUALLY *CRUDE, POORLY-DRAWN, SEMILITERATE, CHEAP, DISPOSABLE KIDDIE FARE--*

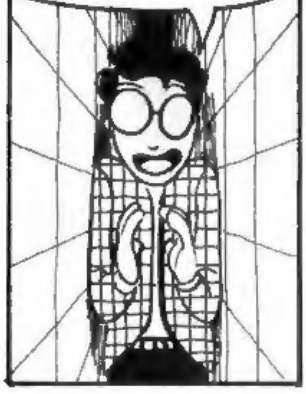
*--BUT--*

THEY DON'T *HAVE* TO BE!

THE *PROBLEM* WAS THAT FOR *MOST PEOPLE*, THAT WAS WHAT *"COMIC BOOK" MEANT!*

DON'T GIMME THAT *COMIC BOOK* TALK, BARNEY!

IF PEOPLE FAILED TO *UNDERSTAND* COMICS, IT WAS BECAUSE THEY DEFINED WHAT COMICS COULD BE *TOO NARROWLY!*



A *PROPER DEFINITION*, IF WE COULD *FIND* ONE, MIGHT GIVE *LIE* TO THE STEREOTYPES--

--AND SHOW THAT THE *POTENTIAL* OF COMICS IS *LIMITLESS* AND *EXCITING!*

THIS IS WHERE OUR JOURNEY *BEGINS.*

"COMICS" IS THE WORD WORTH DEFINING, AS IT REFERS TO THE MEDIUM ITSELF, NOT A SPECIFIC OBJECT AS "COMIC BOOK" OR "COMIC STRIP" DO.
WE CAN ALL VISUALIZE A COMIC
GUY

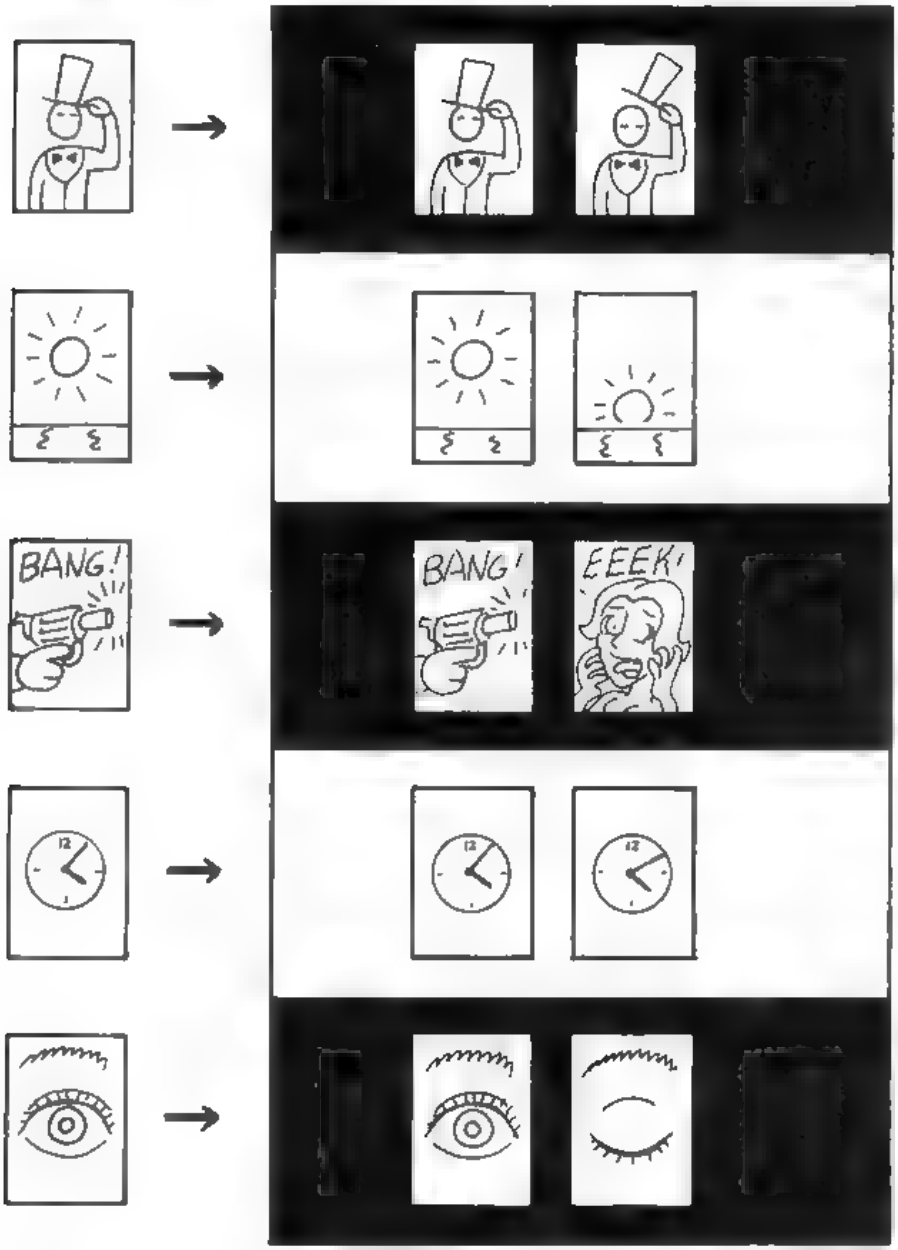
SEE PAGE 216 FOR COPYRIGHT INFORMATION.

MASTER COMICS ARTIST *WILL EISNER* USES THE TERM *SEQUENTIAL ART* WHEN DESCRIBING COMICS.

TAKEN *INDIVIDUALLY*, THE PICTURES BELOW ARE MERELY *THAT-- PICTURES*.

HOWEVER, WHEN PART OF A *SEQUENCE*, EVEN A SEQUENCE OF ONLY *TWO*, THE ART OF THE *IMAGE* IS *TRANSFORMED* INTO SOMETHING *MORE*: *THE ART OF COMICS!*

NOTICE THAT THIS DEFINITION IS STRICTLY *NEUTRAL* ON MATTERS OF *STYLE, QUALITY OR SUBJECT MATTER*

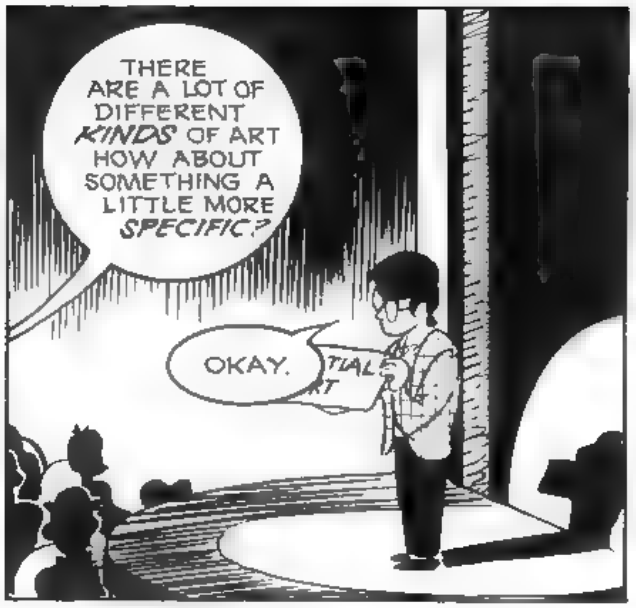


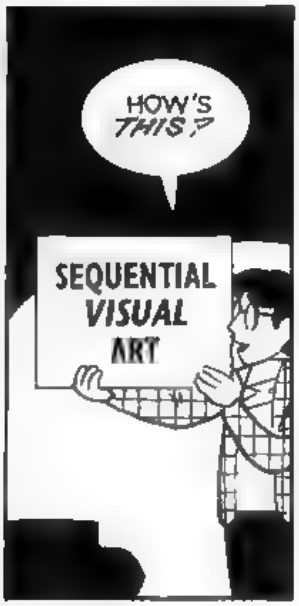

MUCH HAS ALREADY BEEN WRITTEN ON THE VARIOUS *SCHOOLS* OF COMIC ART, ON *PARTICULAR ARTISTS, PARTICULAR TITLES, PARTICULAR TRENDS*.

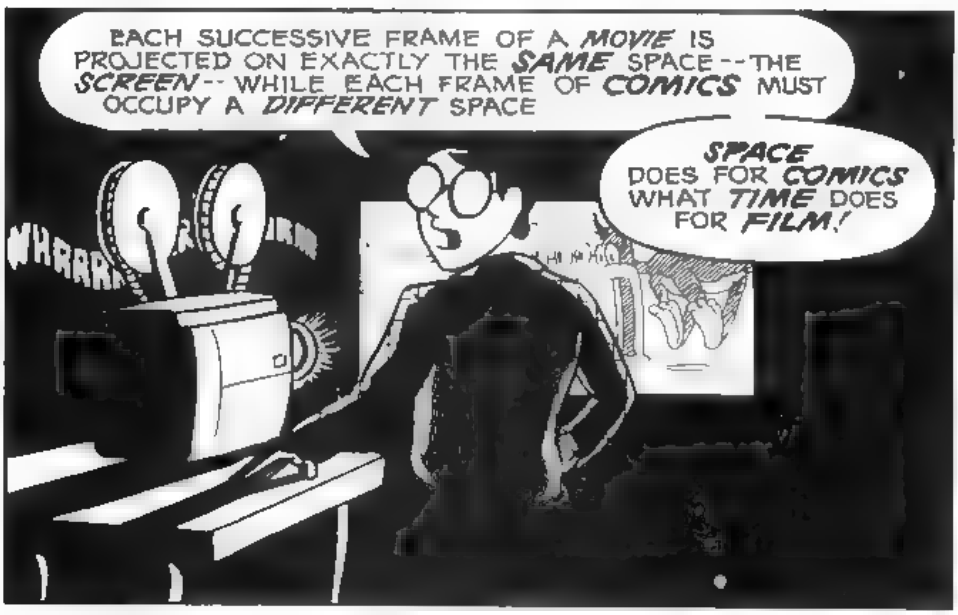
BUT TO *DEFINE* COMICS, WE MUST FIRST DO A LITTLE *AESTHETIC SURGERY* AND SEPARATE *FORM* FROM *CONTENT!*

*EISNER'S OWN *COMICS AND SEQUENTIAL ART* BEING A HAPPY EXCEPTION

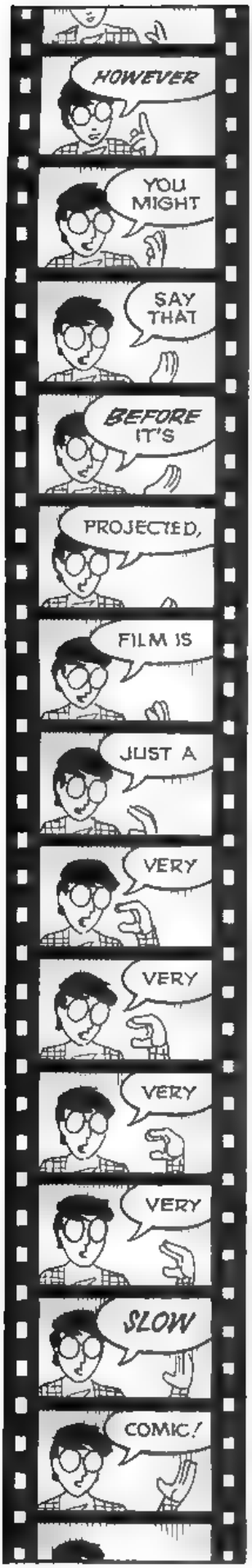
EISNER'S TERM SEEMS LIKE A GOOD PLACE TO START.
LET'S SEE IF WE CAN EXPAND IT TO A PROPER DICTIONARY-STYLE DEFINITION
ANY IDEAS?
SEQUENTIAL ART

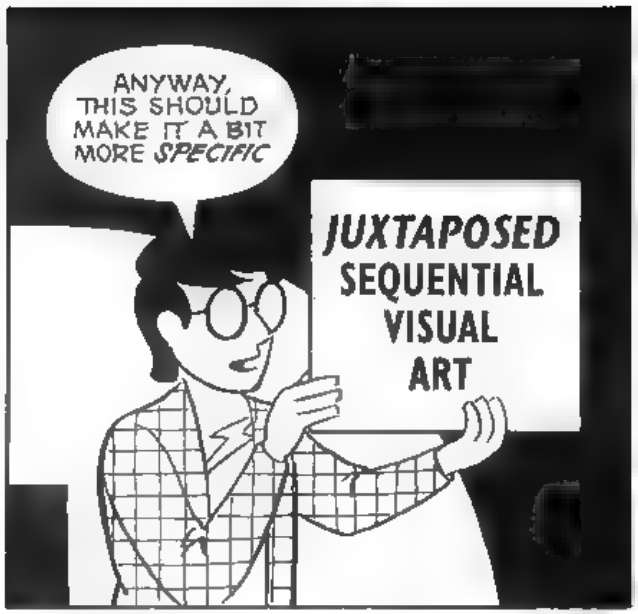



EACH SUCCESSIVE FRAME OF A MOVIE IS PROJECTED ON EXACTLY THE SAME SPACE--THE SCREEN-- WHILE EACH FRAME OF COMICS MUST OCCUPY A DIFFERENT SPACE
SPACE DOES FOR COMICS WHAT TIME DOES FOR FILM!
WHRRR

*JUXTAPOSED= ADJACENT, SIDE-BY-SIDE. GREAT ART SCHOOL WORD.

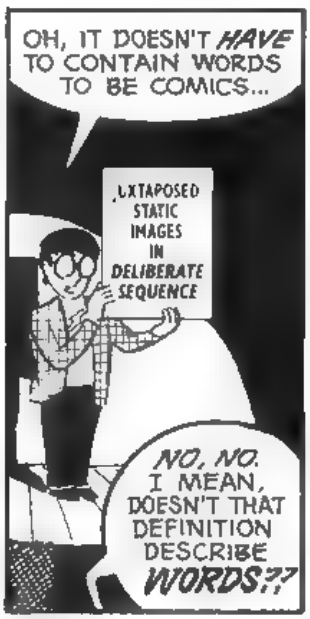

HOWEVER
YOU MIGHT
SAY THAT
BEFORE IT'S
PROJECTED,
FILM IS
JUST A
VERY
VERY
VERY
VERY
SLOW
COMIC!

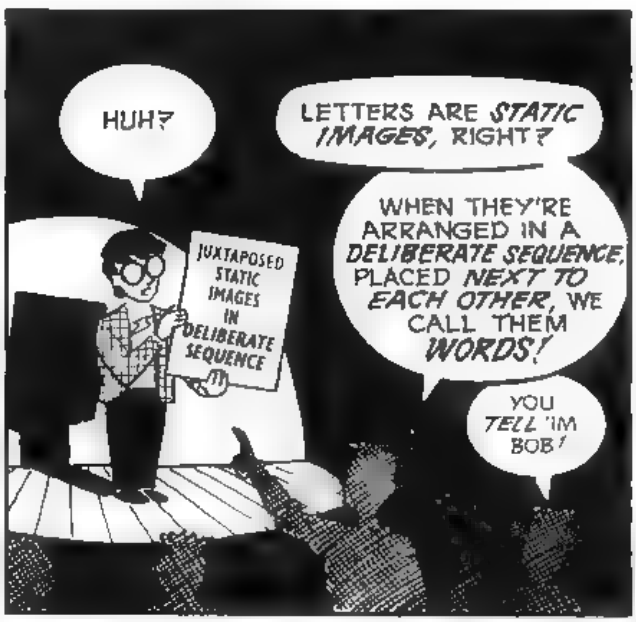

ANYWAY, THIS SHOULD MAKE IT A BIT MORE SPECIFIC
JUXTAPOSED SEQUENTIAL VISUAL ART

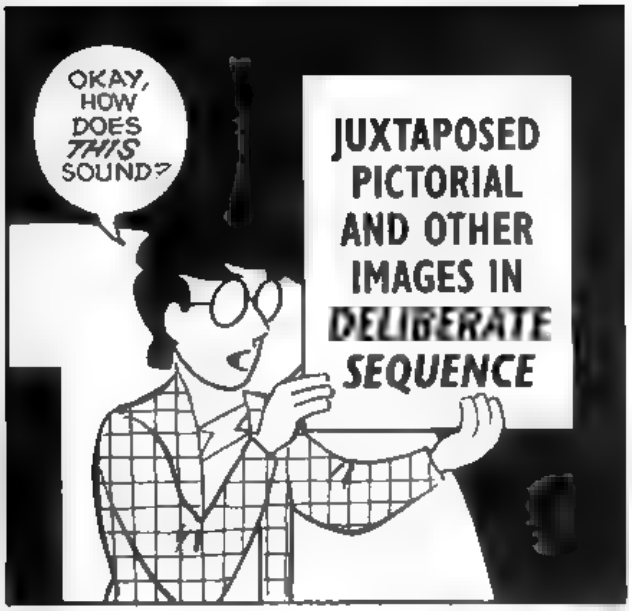
DOES IT HAVE TO SAY "ART"? DOESN'T THAT IMPLY SOME SORT OF VALUE JUDGMENT?
WELL

OKAY, HOW ABOUT THIS?
JUXTAPOSED SEQUENTIAL STATIC IMAGES
NOW IT SOUNDS KIND OF ARBITRARY.

OKAY, HOW ABOUT THIS?
JUXTAPOSED STATIC IMAGES IN DELIBERATE SEQUENCE
WHAT ABOUT WORDS?


OH, IT DOESN'T HAVE TO CONTAIN WORDS TO BE COMICS...
JUXTAPOSED STATIC IMAGES IN DELIBERATE SEQUENCE
NO, NO. I MEAN, DOESN'T THAT DEFINITION DESCRIBE WORDS?!

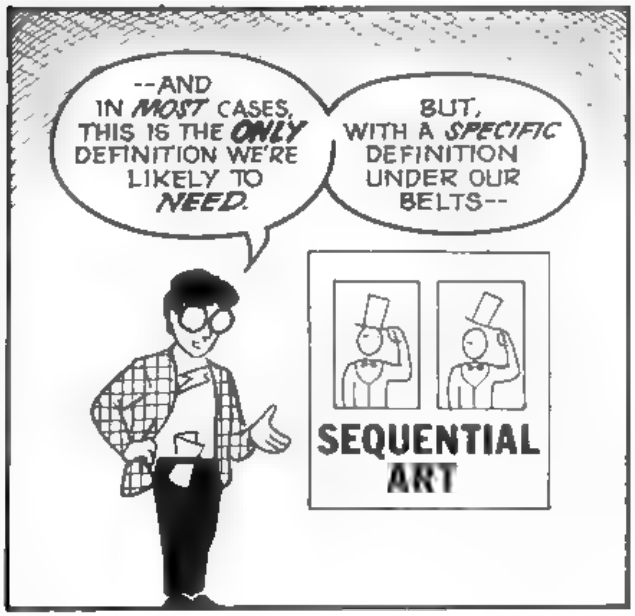

HUH?
LETTERS ARE STATIC IMAGES, RIGHT?
JUXTAPOSED STATIC IMAGES IN DELIBERATE SEQUENCE
WHEN THEY'RE ARRANGED IN A DELIBERATE SEQUENCE, PLACED NEXT TO EACH OTHER, WE CALL THEM WORDS!
YOU TELL 'IM BOB!

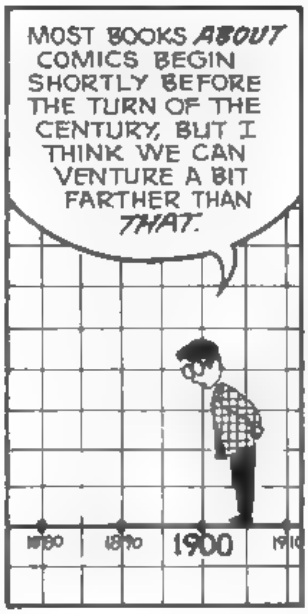


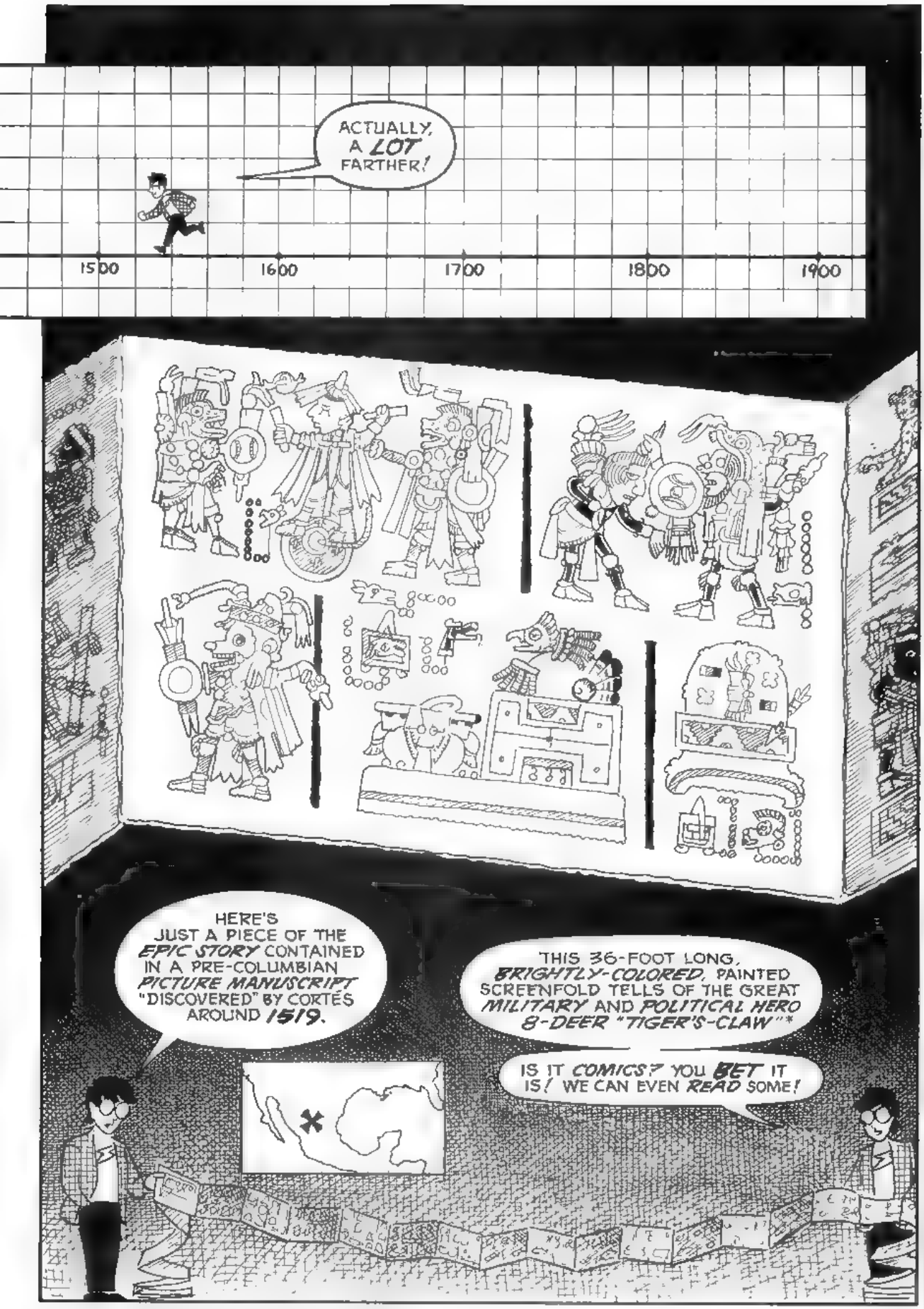
WHAT ABOUT BATMAN?! SHOULDN'T IT HAVE BATMAN IN IT?
JUXTAPOSED PICTORIAL AND OTHER IMAGES IN DELIBERATE SEQUENCE
WHO LET HIM IN?

adv.

**com·ics** (kom'iks) **n.** plural in form, used with a singular verb. **1.** Juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer. **2.** Superheroes in bright colorful costumes, fighting dastardly villains who want to conquer the world, in violent sensational butt-pounding action sequences! **3.** Cute, cuddly bunnies, mice and rollicky bears, dancing to and fro. Hippity-hop, hippity-hop. **4.** Corruptor of our nation's youth.


--AND IN MOST CASES, THIS IS THE ONLY DEFINITION WE'RE LIKELY TO NEED.
BUT, WITH A SPECIFIC DEFINITION UNDER OUR BELTS--
SEQUENTIAL ART


MOST BOOKS ABOUT COMICS BEGIN SHORTLY BEFORE THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, BUT I THINK WE CAN VENTURE A BIT FARTHER THAN THAT.
1900


ACTUALLY, A LOT FARTHER!
1500
1600
1700
1800
1900
HERE'S JUST A PIECE OF THE EPIC STORY CONTAINED IN A PRE-COLUMBIAN PICTURE MANUSCRIPT "DISCOVERED" BY CORTÉS AROUND 1519.
THIS 36-FOOT LONG, BRIGHTLY-COLORED, PAINTED SCREENFOLD TELLS OF THE GREAT MILITARY AND POLITICAL HERO 8-DEER "TIGER'S-CLAW"*
IS IT COMICS? YOU BET IT IS! WE CAN EVEN READ SOME!

* OR "OCELOT'S CLAW" DEPENDING ON WHOSE BOOK YOU READ. THIS SEQUENCE IS BASED ON A READING BY MEXICAN HISTORIAN AND ARCHAEOLOGIST ALFONSO CASO

FIRST, WE SEPARATE WORDS FROM *PICTURES*.

8-DEER "TIGER'S CLAW"

(A NAME)

11 HOUSE 12 MONKEY

(A DATE)

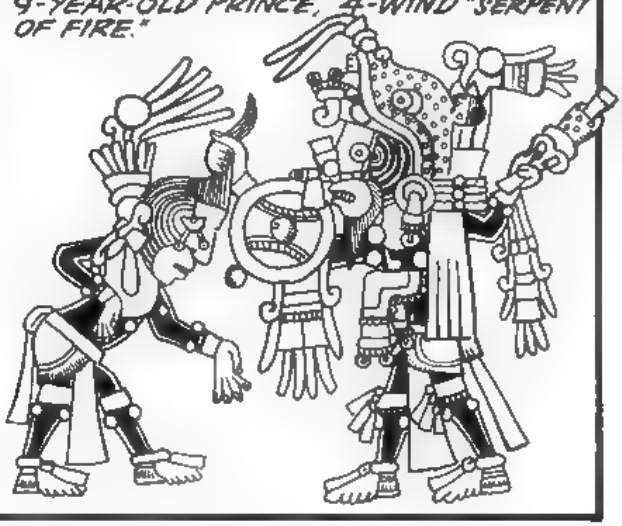
GOD XIPE'S BUNDLE

(GLYPH FOR PLACE WHOSE NAME WE DON'T KNOW.)

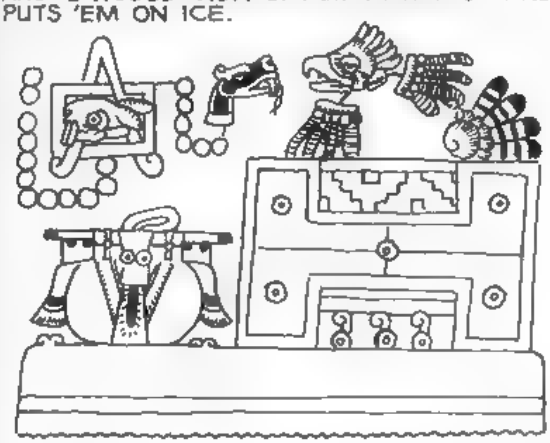
THEN *REVERSE* IT AND STRAIGHTEN IT OUT (THE ORIGINAL READ RIGHT-TO LEFT AND *ZIGZAGGED*) AND *BEGIN:*

THE YEAR *1049 AD*
THE DATE *MAY 3**
THE PLACE *HERE!*

OUR HERO, *8-DEER "TIGER'S CLAW"*, CONQUERS THE PLACE AND CAPTURES THE *9-YEAR-OLD PRINCE, 4-WIND "SERPENT OF FIRE."*

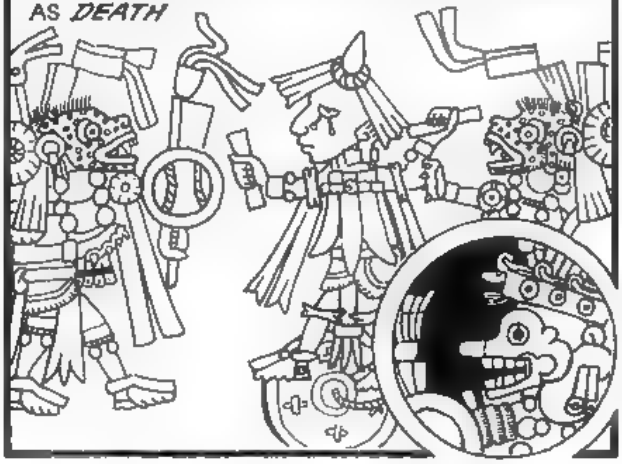


*8*-DEER ALSO CAPTURES THE PRINCE'S OLDER BROTHERS, *10-DOG "EAGLE COPAL BURNING"* AND *6-HOUSE "ROW OF FLINT KNIVES"* AND PUTS 'EM ON ICE.

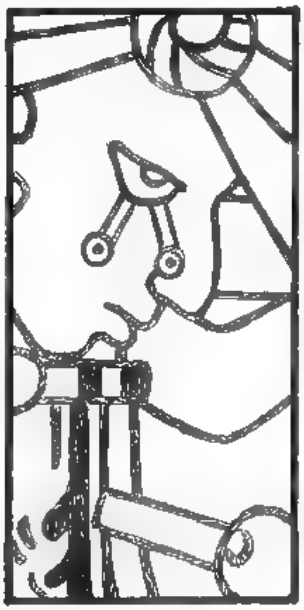


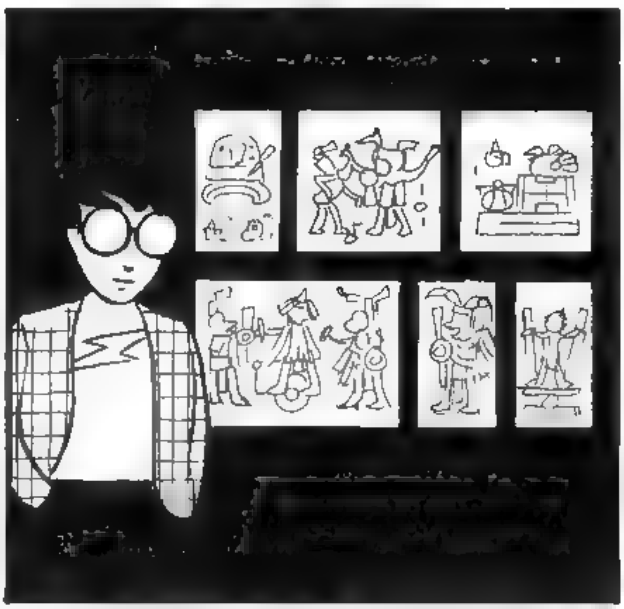
(I'M TAKING THE TRANSLATOR'S WORD ON THIS ONE.)

THE FOLLOWING YEAR, *8-DEER* AND (PROBABLY) HIS BROTHER, DISGUISED AS *TIGERS*, ENGAGE IN *SACRIFICIAL GLADITORIAL COMBAT* WITH THE PRINCE, *10-DOG*, AND ANOTHER WARRIOR DISGUISED AS *DEATH*



*8*-DEER KILLS THE OTHER PRINCE, *6-HOUSE "ROW OF FLINT KNIVES"* EIGHT DAYS LATER.





*WE KNOW THE YEAR; I'M JUST *GUESSING* AT THE DATE REPRESENTED BY "12 MONKEY"

HUNDREDS OF YEARS BEFORE CORTÉS BEGAN COLLECTING COMICS, FRANCE PRODUCED THE STRIKINGLY SIMILAR WORK WE CALL THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY.

THIS 230 FOOT LONG TAPESTRY DETAILS THE NORMAN CONQUEST OF ENGLAND, BEGINNING IN 1066.

FAR FROM DISQUALIFYING THESE AS COMICS, I THINK MODERN COMIC BOOK ARTISTS SHOULD TAKE NOTE OF THE POSSIBILITIES OF SUCH WHOLE PAGE COMPOSITIONS AND HOW FEW ARTISTS HAVE MADE GOOD USE OF THEM SINCE!

WHICH ONE IS THE PRINCE?

PERENNIAL EXCEPTION WILL EISNER

WHAT, NO HORSES?

FINDING COMICS BEYOND OUR OWN MILLENNIUM IS A BIT TRICKIER

1000 1100 1200

JUXTAPOSED PICTORIAL AND OTHER IMAGES IN DELIBERATE SEQUENCE ?

AT FIRST GLANCE, EGYPTIAN HIEROGLYPHICS WOULD SEEM TO FIT OUR DEFINITION PERFECTLY.

BUT MUCH DEPENDS ON OUR USE OF THE WORD "PICTORIAL"

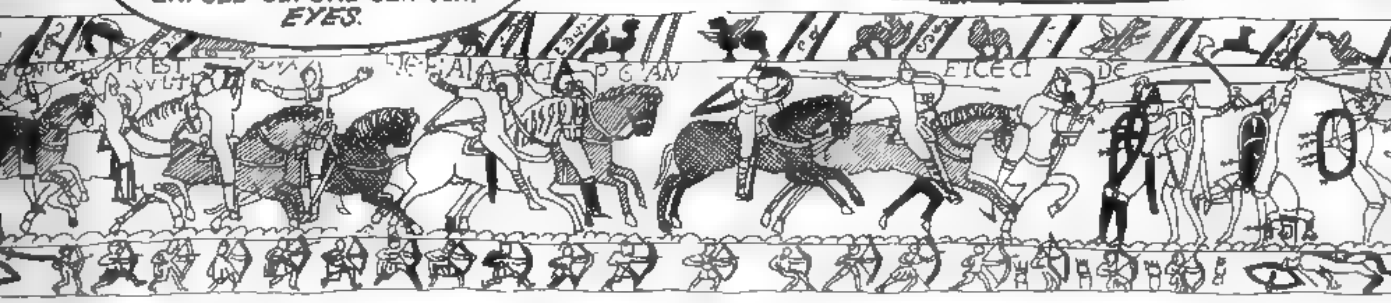
I'M USING IT TO INDICATE AT LEAST SOME RESEMBLANCE TO THE SUBJECT BUT THESE GLYPHS REPRESENT ONLY SOUNDS, NOT UNLIKE OUR ALPHABET.

= "baiu"

= "nek"

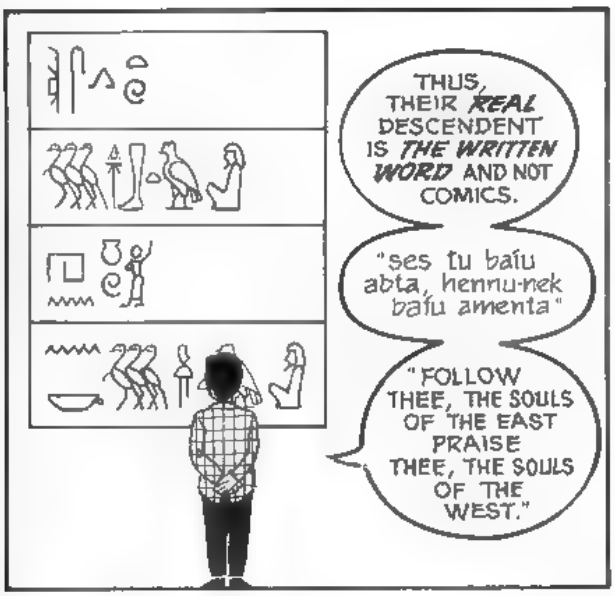
READING *LEFT TO RIGHT* WE SEE THE *EVENTS* OF THE CONQUEST, IN *DELIBERATE CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER* UNFOLD BEFORE OUR VERY *EYES*.

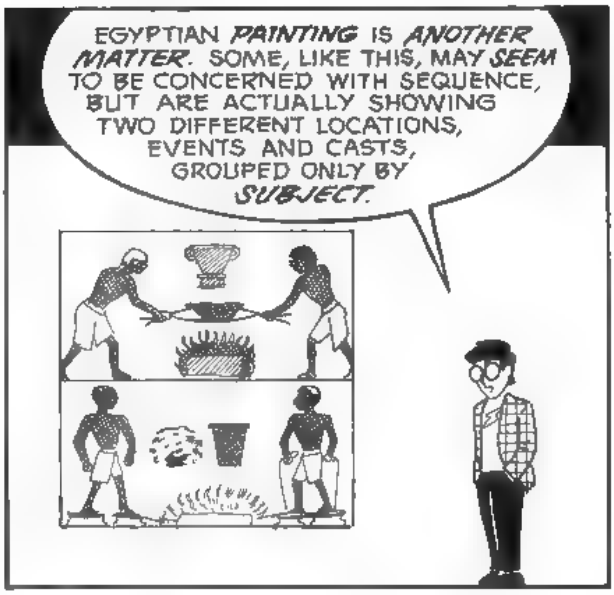
AS WITH THE *MEXICAN CODEX*, THERE ARE NO *PANEL BORDERS* PER SE, BUT THERE ARE CLEAR DIVISIONS OF SCENE BY *SUBJECT MATTER*.

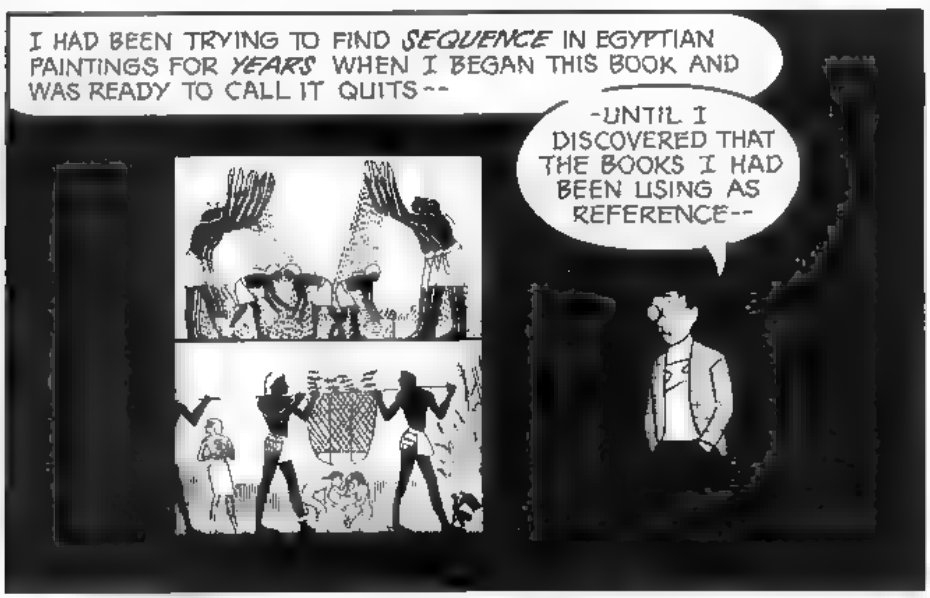


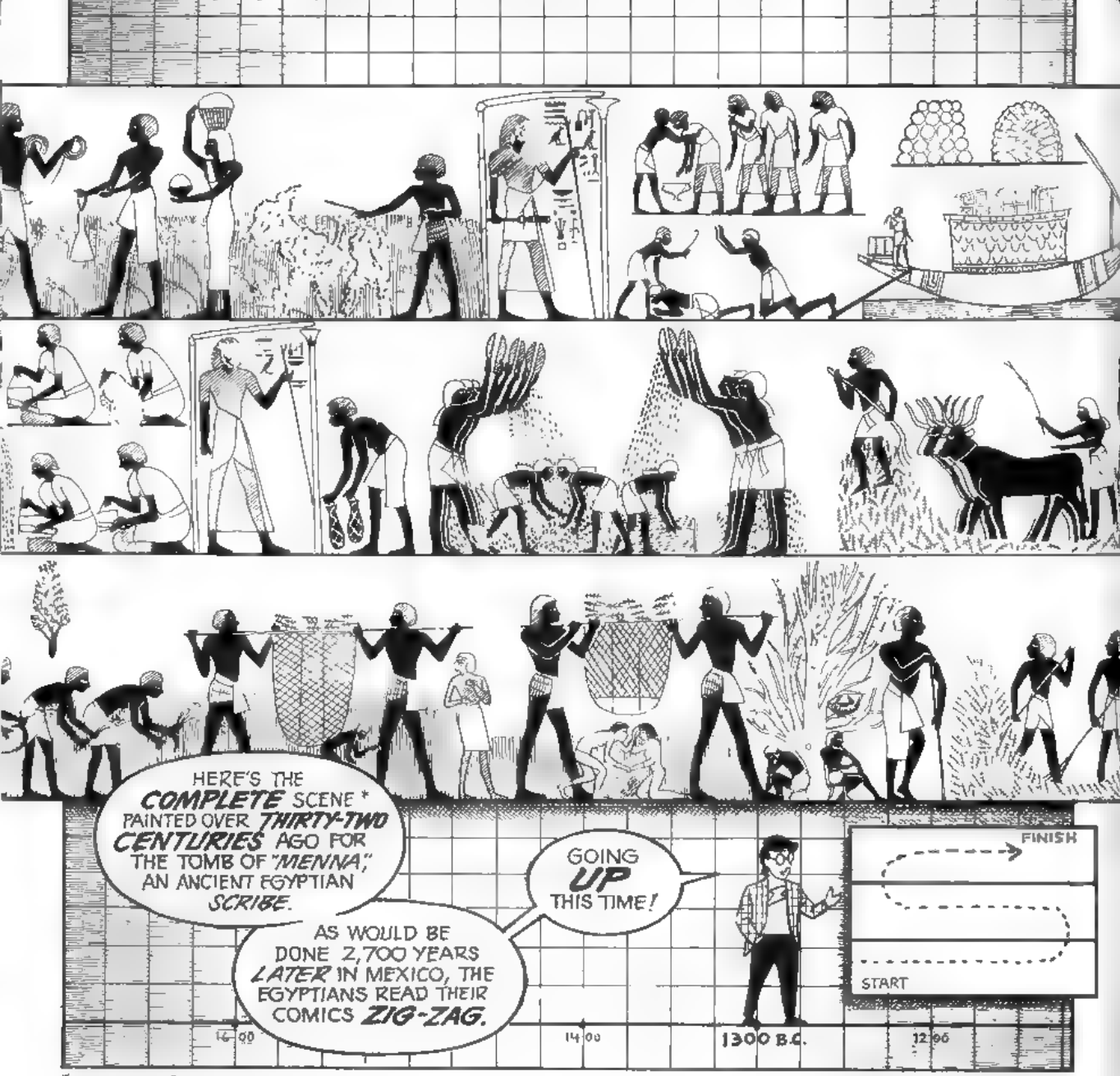
DUKE WILLIAM REMOVES HIS HELMET TO RALLY HIS SOLDIERS

HAROLD'S ARMY IS CUT TO PIECES


THUS, THEIR *REAL* DESCENDENT IS *THE WRITTEN WORD* AND NOT COMICS.
"ses tu baiu abta, hennu-nek baiu amenta"
"FOLLOW THEE, THE SOULS OF THE EAST PRAISE THEE, THE SOULS OF THE WEST."


EGYPTIAN *PAINTING* IS *ANOTHER MATTER*. SOME, LIKE THIS, MAY *SEEM* TO BE CONCERNED WITH SEQUENCE, BUT ARE ACTUALLY SHOWING TWO DIFFERENT LOCATIONS, EVENTS AND CASTS, GROUPED ONLY BY *SUBJECT*.


I HAD BEEN TRYING TO FIND *SEQUENCE* IN EGYPTIAN PAINTINGS FOR *YEARS* WHEN I BEGAN THIS BOOK AND WAS READY TO CALL IT QUITS--
-UNTIL I DISCOVERED THAT THE BOOKS I HAD BEEN USING AS REFERENCE--
--HAD ONLY BEEN SHOWING ME *PART* OF THE PICTURE!

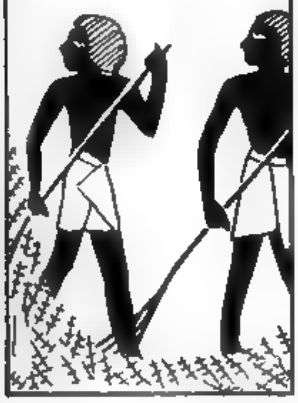

HERE'S THE COMPLETE SCENE * PAINTED OVER THIRTY-TWO CENTURIES AGO FOR THE TOMB OF "MENNA," AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN SCRIBE.
AS WOULD BE DONE 2,700 YEARS LATER IN MEXICO, THE EGYPTIANS READ THEIR COMICS ZIG-ZAG.
GOING UP THIS TIME!
FINISH
START
1600
1400
1300 B.C.
1200

* MORE *NEARLY* COMPLETE, ANYWAY

-- THEN CARRYING IT IN BASKETS TO A THRESHING LOCATION (IN THE BACKGROUND TWO GIRLS FIGHT OVER BITS OF WHEAT LEFT BEHIND, AS TWO WORKERS SIT UNDER A TREE, ONE SLEEPING, ONE PLAYING THE FLUTE!)

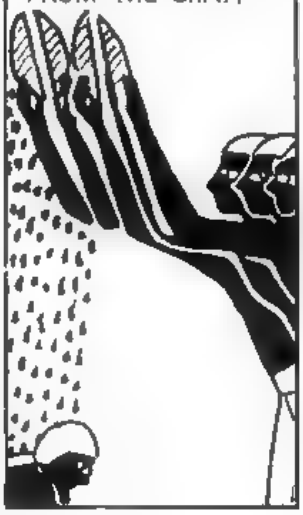
PAINTING TRACED FOR BLACK AND WHITE REPRODUCTION

THE SHEAVES ARE THEN *RAKED OUT* INTO A *THICK CARPET OF WHEAT.*



THEN OXEN TREAD *KERNELS* OUT OF THE HUSKS.

NEXT, PEASANTS SEPARATE THE WHEAT FROM THE CHAFF

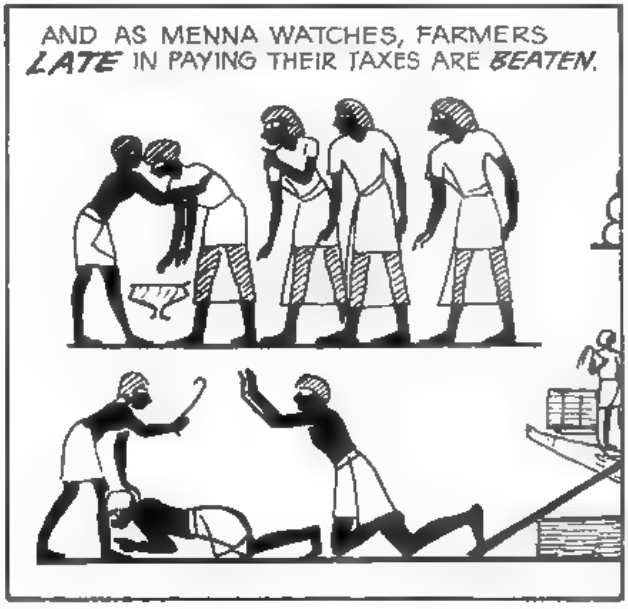


OLD MENNA HIMSELF LOOKS ON - *

--AS LOYAL SCRIBES RECORD THE YIELD ON THEIR TABLETS

NOW AN OFFICIAL USES A MEASURING ROPE TO *SURVEY THE LAND* AND DECIDE HOW MUCH WHEAT IS OWED IN *TAXES.*

AND AS MENNA WATCHES, FARMERS *LATE* IN PAYING THEIR TAXES ARE *BEATEN.*

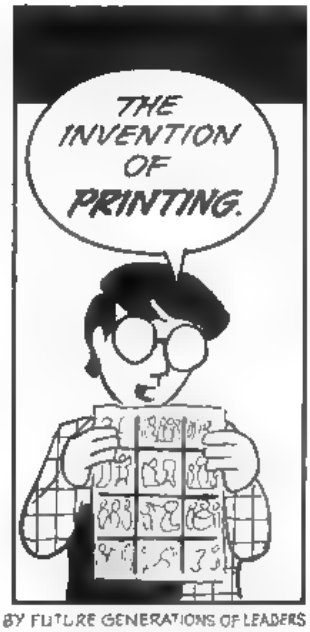


I'LL *GLADLY ADMIT* THAT I HAVE *NO IDEA* WHERE OR *WHEN* COMICS ORIGINATED. LET *OTHERS* WRESTLE WITH *THAT* ONE

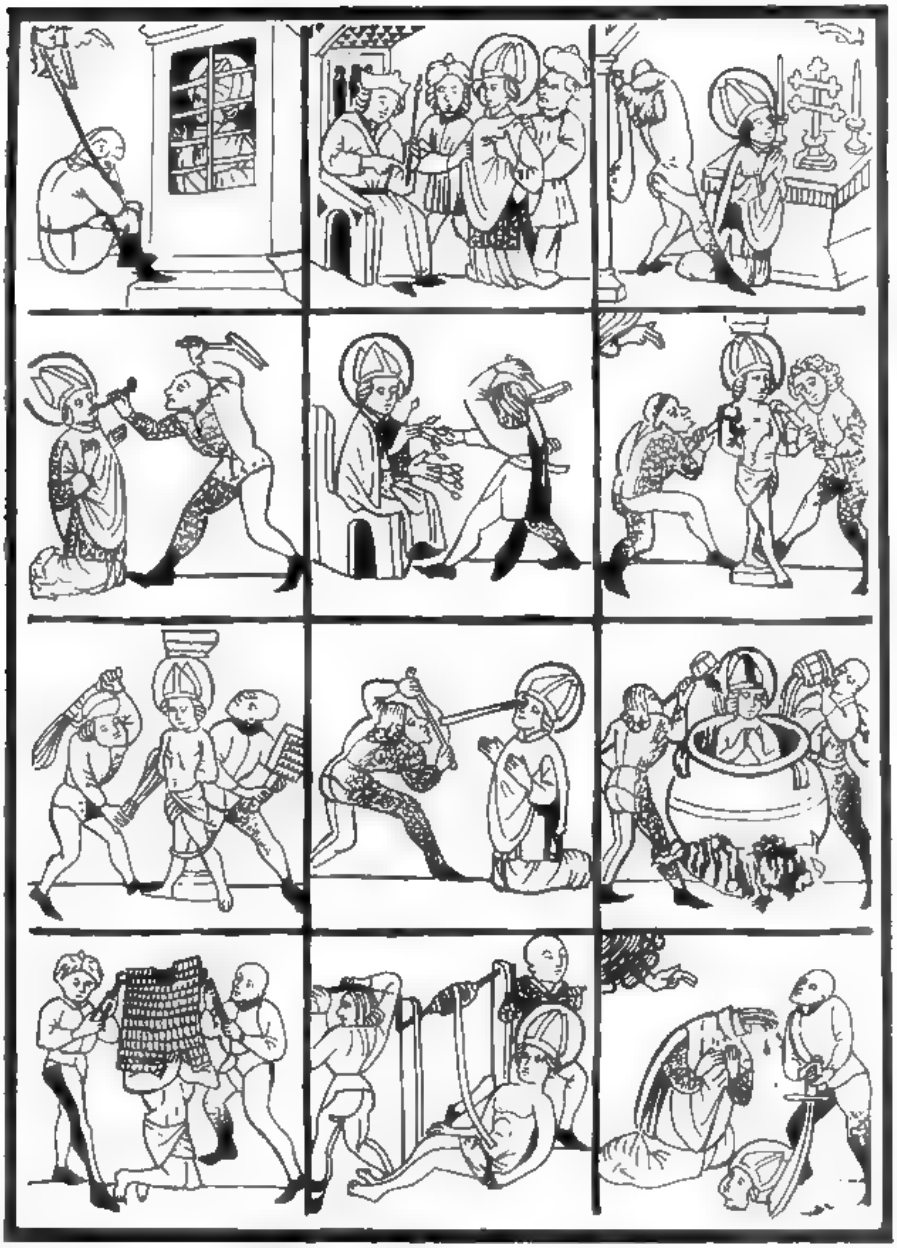
I'VE ONLY SCRATCHED THE *SURFACE* IN THIS CHAPTER.. *TRAJAN'S COLUMN, GREEK PAINTING, JAPANESE SCROLLS...* ALL THESE HAVE BEEN SUGGESTED AND ALL SHOULD BE EXPLORED.

BUT THERE IS *ONE* EVENT WHICH LOOMS AS LARGE IN *COMICS* HISTORY AS IT DOES IN THE HISTORY OF THE *WRITTEN WORD.*

*THE INVENTION OF PRINTING.*

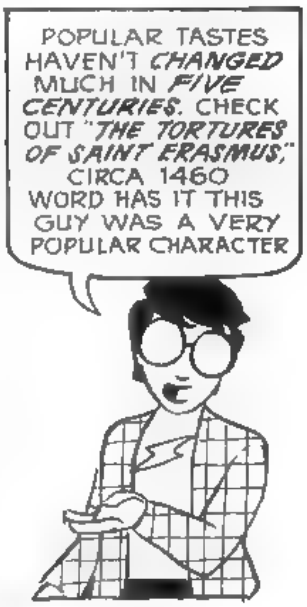


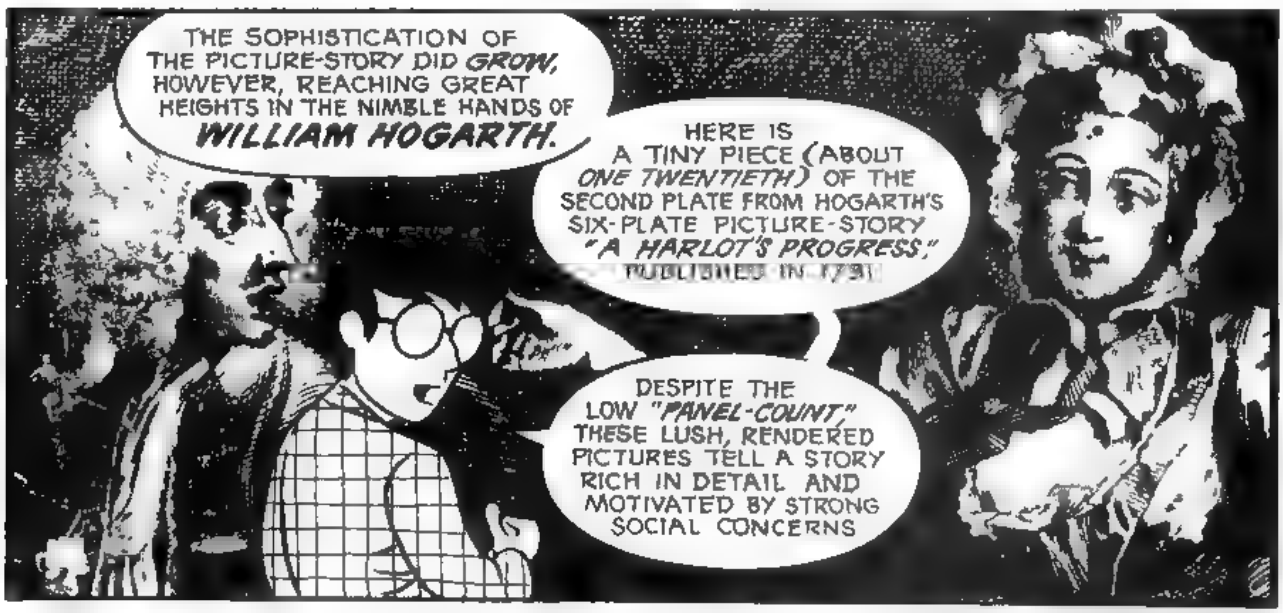
* FACE GOUGED OUT BY FUTURE GENERATIONS OF LEADERS



ART RESTORED FOR CLARITY - OTHERWISE UNCHANGED

WITH THE INVENTION OF PRINTING*, THE ART-FORM WHICH HAD BEEN A DIVERSION OF THE *RICH* AND *POWERFUL* NOW COULD BE ENJOYED BY *EVERYONE!*


POPULAR TASTES HAVEN'T *CHANGED* MUCH IN *FIVE CENTURIES*. CHECK OUT "*THE TORTURES OF SAINT ERASMUS*," CIRCA 1460 WORD HAS IT THIS GUY WAS A VERY POPULAR CHARACTER


THE SOPHISTICATION OF THE PICTURE-STORY DID *GROW*, HOWEVER, REACHING GREAT HEIGHTS IN THE NIMBLE HANDS OF *WILLIAM HOGARTH.*
HERE IS A TINY PIECE (ABOUT *ONE TWENTIETH*) OF THE SECOND PLATE FROM HOGARTH'S SIX-PLATE PICTURE-STORY *"A HARLOT'S PROGRESS,"* PUBLISHED IN 1731
DESPITE THE LOW *"PANEL-COUNT,"* THESE LUSH, RENDERED PICTURES TELL A STORY RICH IN DETAIL AND MOTIVATED BY STRONG SOCIAL CONCERNS



* MAYBE I SHOULDN'T SAY "INVENT" EUROPEANS WERE A BIT LATE IN DISCOVERING PRINTING

HOGARTH'S STORIES WERE FIRST EXHIBITED AS A SERIES OF *PAINTINGS* AND LATER SOLD AS A PORTFOLIO OF *ENGRAVINGS*.

BOTH THE PAINTINGS AND ENGRAVINGS WERE DESIGNED TO BE VIEWED *SIDE-BY-SIDE* --*IN SEQUENCE!*

*"A HARLOT'S PROGRESS"* AND ITS SEQUEL *"A RAKE'S PROGRESS"* PROVED SO POPULAR, NEW *COPYRIGHT LAWS* WERE CREATED TO PROTECT THIS NEW FORM

GRRR"

THE FATHER OF THE *MODERN* COMIC IN MANY WAYS IS *RODOLPHE TÖPFFER*, WHOSE LIGHT SATIRIC PICTURE STORIES, STARTING IN THE MID-1800's, EMPLOYED *CARTOONING* AND *PANEL BORDERS*, AND FEATURED THE FIRST INTERDEPENDENT COMBINATION OF *WORDS* AND *PICTURES* SEEN IN EUROPE.

(TRANSLATION BY E. WIESE)

UNFORTUNATELY, TÖPFFER HIMSELF FAILED TO GRASP AT FIRST THE FULL POTENTIAL OF HIS INVENTION, SEEING IT AS A MERE *DIVERSION*, A SIMPLE *HOBBY*...

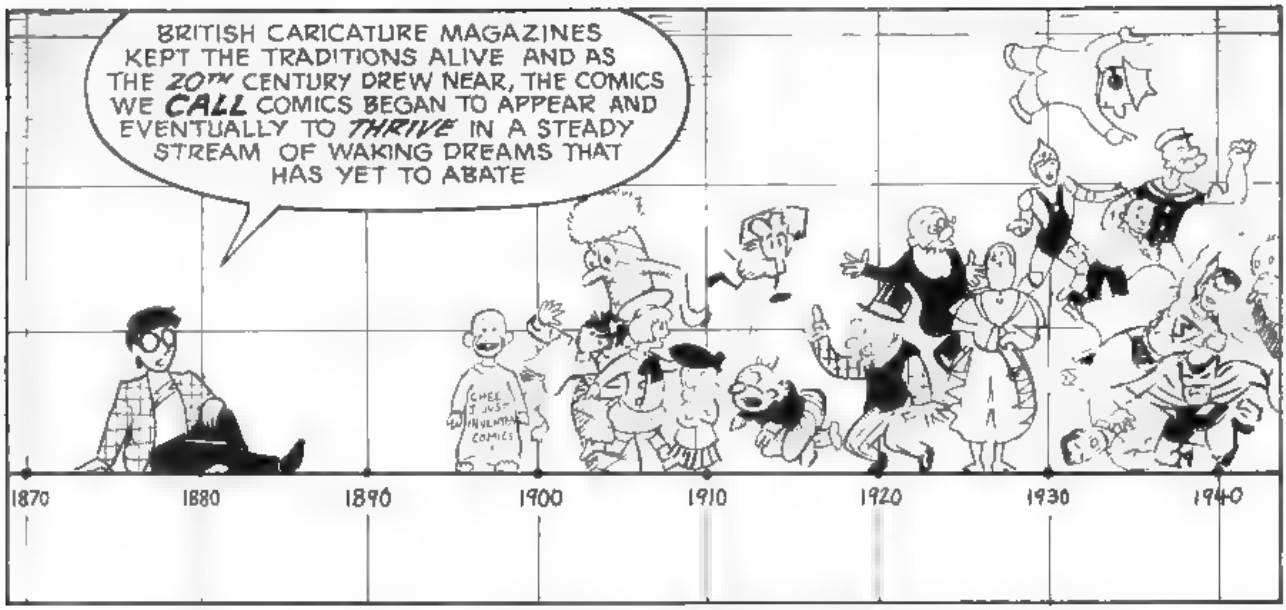
"IF FOR THE FUTURE, HE [TÖPFFER] WOULD CHOOSE A LESS FRIVOLOUS SUBJECT AND RESTRICT HIMSELF A LITTLE, HE WOULD PRODUCE THINGS BEYOND ALL CONCEPTION."

-Goethe

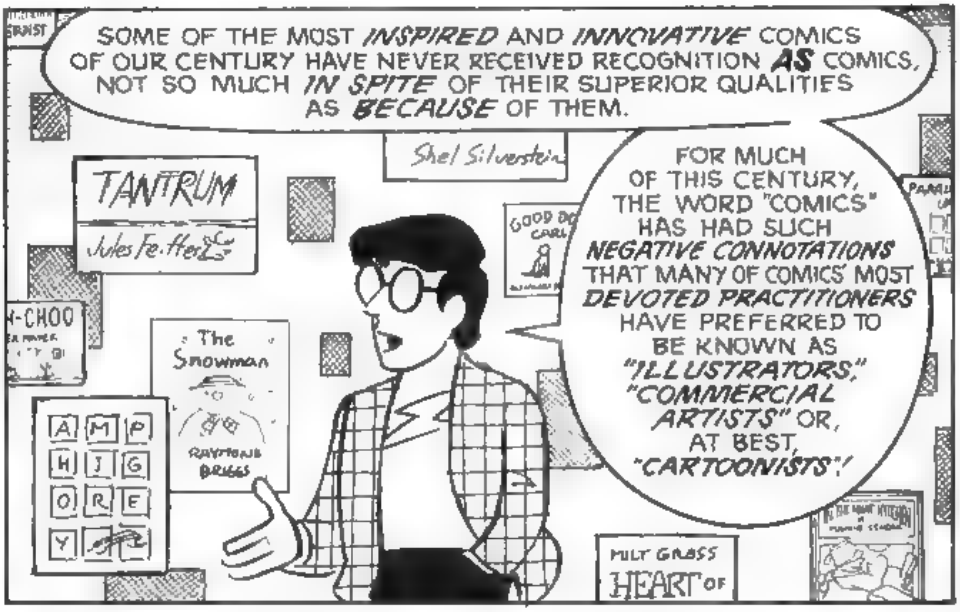
EVEN SO, TÖPFFER'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE *UNDERSTANDING* OF COMICS IS CONSIDERABLE, IF ONLY FOR HIS REALIZATION THAT HE WHO WAS NEITHER ARTIST NOR WRITER--

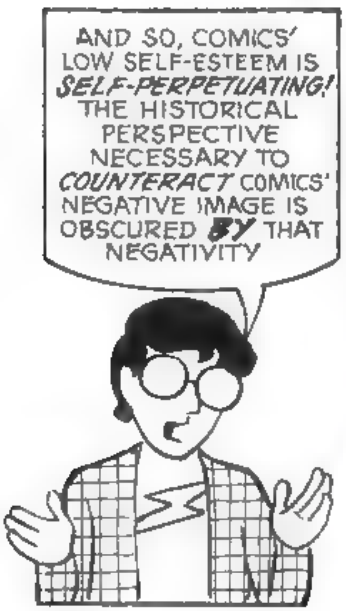
-- HAD CREATED AND MASTERED A FORM WHICH WAS AT ONCE *BOTH* AND *NEITHER*.

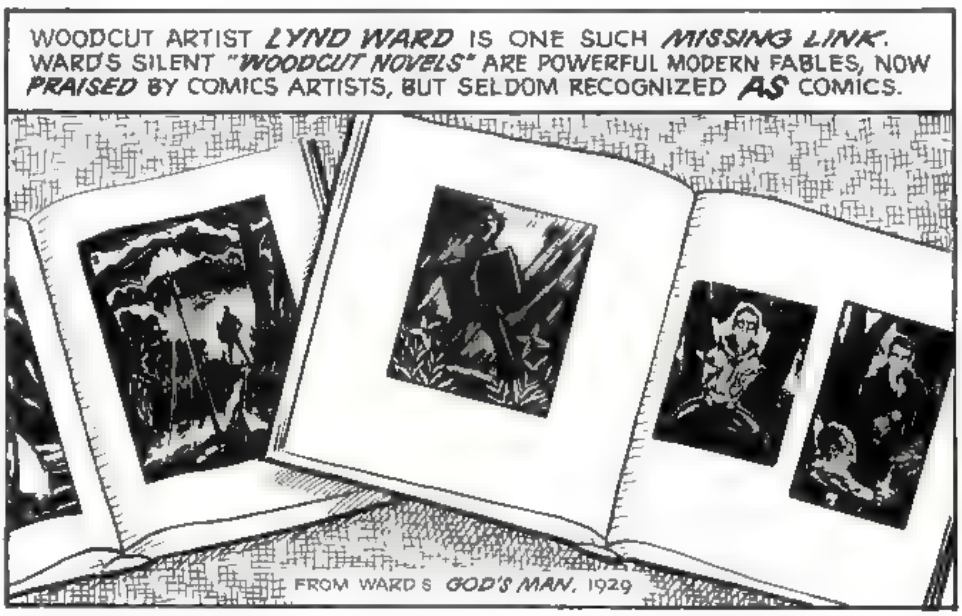
A LANGUAGE ALL ITS OWN.


BRITISH CARICATURE MAGAZINES KEPT THE TRADITIONS ALIVE AND AS THE 20TH CENTURY DREW NEAR, THE COMICS WE CALL COMICS BEGAN TO APPEAR AND EVENTUALLY TO THRIVE IN A STEADY STREAM OF WAKING DREAMS THAT HAS YET TO ABATE
1870
1880
1890
1900
1910
1920
1930
1940

BUT EVEN IN THIS CENTURY, OUR DEFINITION CAN HELP TO ILLUMINATE THE WORKS OF SOME UNSUNG HEROES
JUXTAPOSED PICTORIAL AND OTHER IMAGES IN DELIBERATE SEQUENCE

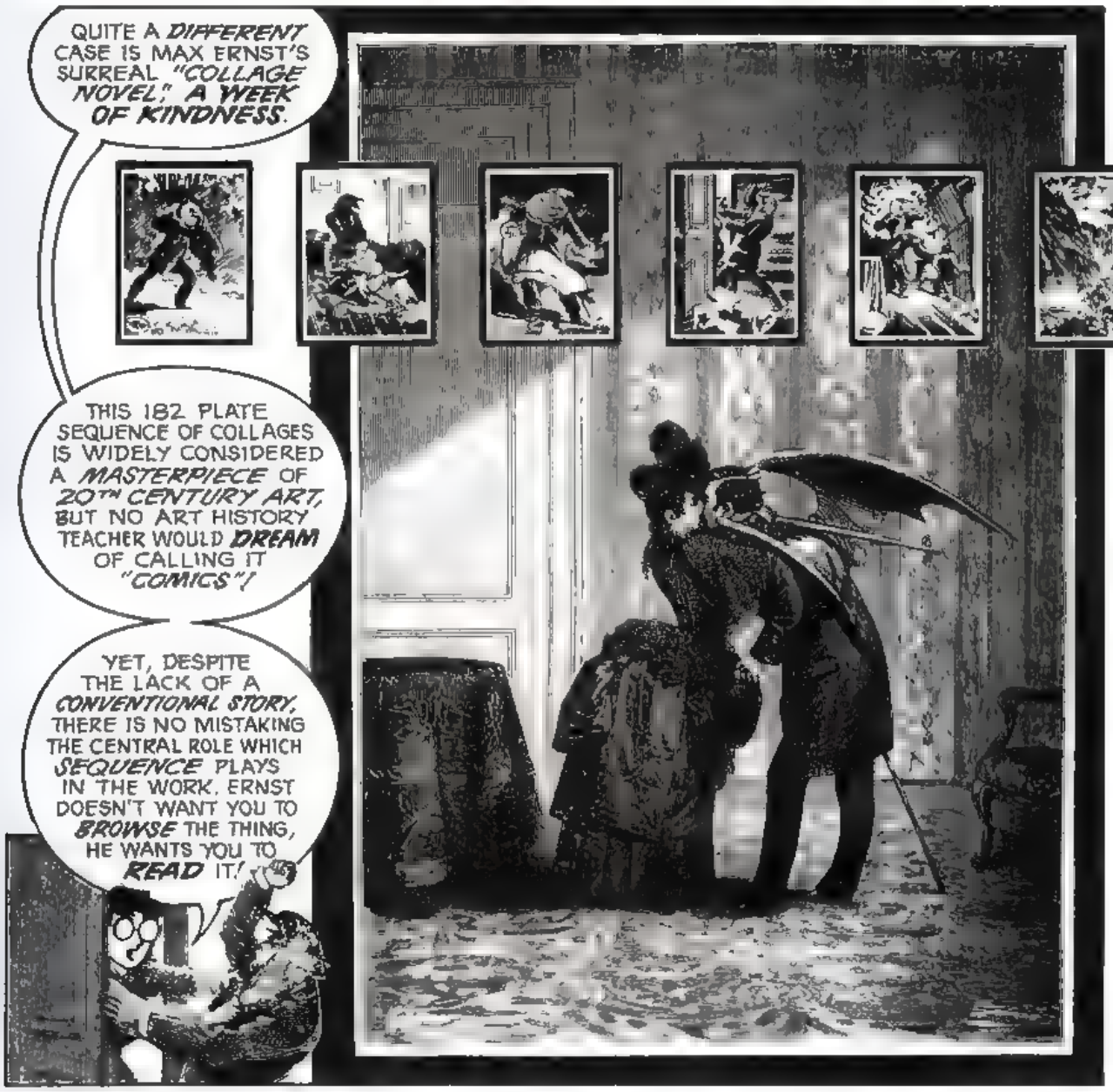

SOME OF THE MOST INSPIRED AND INNOVATIVE COMICS OF OUR CENTURY HAVE NEVER RECEIVED RECOGNITION AS COMICS, NOT SO MUCH IN SPITE OF THEIR SUPERIOR QUALITIES AS BECAUSE OF THEM.
TANTRUM
Jules Feiffer
Shel Silverstein
The Snowman
RAYMOND BRIGGS
FOR MUCH OF THIS CENTURY, THE WORD "COMICS" HAS HAD SUCH NEGATIVE CONNOTATIONS THAT MANY OF COMICS' MOST DEVOTED PRACTITIONERS HAVE PREFERRED TO BE KNOWN AS "ILLUSTRATORS," "COMMERCIAL ARTISTS" OR, AT BEST, "CARTOONISTS"!
MILT GROSS
HEART OF


AND SO, COMICS' LOW SELF-ESTEEM IS SELF-PERPETUATING! THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE NECESSARY TO COUNTERACT COMICS' NEGATIVE IMAGE IS OBSCURED BY THAT NEGATIVITY

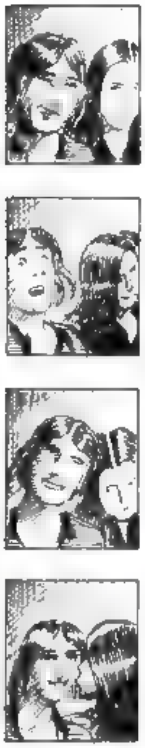

WOODCUT ARTIST LYND WARD IS ONE SUCH MISSING LINK. WARD'S SILENT "WOODCUT NOVELS" ARE POWERFUL MODERN FABLES, NOW PRAISED BY COMICS ARTISTS, BUT SELDOM RECOGNIZED AS COMICS.
FROM WARD'S GOD'S MAN, 1929

ARTISTS LIKE WARD AND BELGIAN *FRANS MASEREEL* SAID MUCH THROUGH THEIR WOODCUTS ABOUT THE POTENTIAL OF COMICS, BUT FEW IN THE COMICS COMMUNITY OF THE DAY COULD *GET THE MESSAGE*.
THEIR *DEFINITION* OF COMICS, *THEN AS NOW*, WAS SIMPLY TOO *NARROW* TO INCLUDE SUCH WORK

FROM FRANK MASEREEL'S *PASSIONATE JOURNEY*, 1919

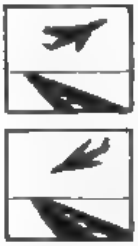

QUITE A *DIFFERENT* CASE IS MAX ERNST'S SURREAL *"COLLAGE NOVEL," A WEEK OF KINDNESS*.
THIS 182 PLATE SEQUENCE OF COLLAGES IS WIDELY CONSIDERED A *MASTERPIECE* OF *20TH CENTURY ART*, BUT NO ART HISTORY TEACHER WOULD *DREAM* OF CALLING IT *"COMICS"!*
YET, DESPITE THE LACK OF A *CONVENTIONAL STORY*, THERE IS NO MISTAKING THE CENTRAL ROLE WHICH *SEQUENCE* PLAYS IN THE WORK. ERNST DOESN'T WANT YOU TO *BROWSE* THE THING, HE WANTS YOU TO *READ* IT!

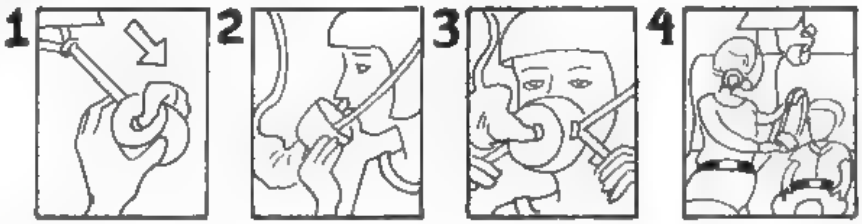
IF WE DON'T EXCLUDE *PHOTOGRAPHY* FROM OUR DEFINITION, THEN HALF OF *AMERICA* HAS BEEN IN COMICS AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER.



IN *SOME* COUNTRIES, PHOTO-COMICS ARE, IN FACT, QUITE *POPULAR*.

MEANWHILE, *PICTURES IN SEQUENCE* ARE FINALLY BEING RECOGNIZED AS THE EXCELLENT *COMMUNICATION TOOL* THAT THEY ARE, BUT ***STILL*** NOBODY REFERS TO THEM AS *COMICS!* "*DIAGRAMS*" SOUNDS MORE *DIGNIFIED*, I SUPPOSE.






FROM *STAINED GLASS WINDOWS* SHOWING BIBLICAL SCENES IN ORDER TO *MONET'S SERIES PAINTINGS*, TO YOUR *CAR OWNER'S MANUAL*, COMICS TURN UP *ALL OVER* WHEN *SEQUENTIAL ART* IS EMPLOYED AS A DEFINITION

THANKS TO MATT [illegible] FOR THE SUGGESTION

**com·ics** (kom'iks) **n.** plural in form, used with a singular verb. **1.** Juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer.

FOR ALL THE DOORS THAT OUR DEFINITION *OPENS*, THERE IS ONE WHICH IT *CLOSES*.

*SINGLE PANELS* LIKE *THIS* ONE ARE OFTEN *LUMPED IN* WITH COMICS, YET THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A SEQUENCE OF *ONE!*

"Mommy, why ain't I Juxtaposed?"

SUCH SINGLE PANELS MIGHT BE CLASSIFIED AS "*COMIC ART*" IN THE SENSE THAT THEY DERIVE PART OF THEIR *VISUAL VOCABULARY* FROM COMICS--

BUT I SAY THEY'RE NO MORE COMICS THAN THIS STILL OF HUMPHREY BOGART IS FILM!
HI, BOGEY
THEY ARE CARTOONS, AS AM I, AND THERE IS A LONG-STANDING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMICS AND CARTOONS.
--BUT THEY ARE NOT THE SAME THING! ONE IS AN APPROACH TO PICTURE-MAKING-- A STYLE, IF YOU LIKE--WHILE THE OTHER IS A MEDIUM WHICH OFTEN EMPLOYS THAT APPROACH.
HEY!
MORE ON THIS LATER
THIS SAME SINGLE PANEL MIGHT ALSO BE LABELLED COMICS FOR ITS JUXTAPOSITION OF WORDS AND PICTURES
"Mommy, why ain't I Juxtaposed?"
A GREAT MAJORITY OF MODERN COMICS DO FEATURE WORDS AND PICTURES IN COMBINATION AND IT'S A SUBJECT WORTHY OF STUDY, BUT WHEN USED AS A DEFINITION FOR COMICS, I'VE FOUND IT TO BE A LITTLE TOO RESTRICTIVE FOR MY TASTE
OF COURSE, IF ANYONE WANTS TO WRITE A BOOK TAKING THE OPPOSITE VIEW, YOU CAN BET I'LL BE THE FIRST IN LINE TO BUY A COPY!
IF COMICS' SPECTACULARLY VARIED PAST IS ANY INDICATION, COMICS' FUTURE WILL BE VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT USING THE STANDARDS OF THE PRESENT.
BUT OUR DEFINITION CAN OFFER US SOME CLUES.
1980
1990
2000
2010
2020
2030
2040
AND THIS TIME, THE SECRET IS NOT IN WHAT THE DEFINITION SAYS BUT IN WHAT IT DOESN'T SAY!
SEQUENTIAL ART

DADA
BIOGRAPHY
HORROR
ROMANCE
SURREALISM
BLANK VERSE
HISTORICAL FICTION
EPIC POETRY
FOLK TALES
SOCIAL ALLEGORY
EROTICA
MYSTERY
ADAPTATIONS
RELIGIOUS TOPICS
STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS
SATIRE
SEQUENTIAL ART

FOR EXAMPLE, OUR DEFINITION SAYS NOTHING ABOUT *SUPERHEROES* OR *FUNNY ANIMALS* NOTHING ABOUT *FANTASY/SCIENCE-FICTION* OR *READER AGE*.

NO *GENRES* ARE LISTED IN OUR DEFINITION, NO TYPES OF *SUBJECT MATTER*, NO *STYLES* OF PROSE OR POETRY

NOTHING IS SAID ABOUT *PAPER* AND *INK*. NO *PRINTING PROCESS* IS MENTIONED. PRINTING *ITSELF* ISN'T EVEN SPECIFIED! NOTHING IS SAID ABOUT *TECHNICAL PENS* OR *BRISTOL BOARD* OR *WINDSOR & NEWTON FINEST SABLE SERIES 7 NUMBER TWO BRUSHES!*

NO *MATERIALS* ARE RULED OUT BY OUR DEFINITION NO *TOOLS* ARE PROHIBITED

SEQUENTIAL ART

SPRAY PAINT

THERE IS NO MENTION OF *BLACK LINES* AND *FLAT COLORED INK*. NO CALLS FOR *EXAGGERATED ANATOMY* OR FOR *REPRESENTATIONAL ART* OF ANY KIND.

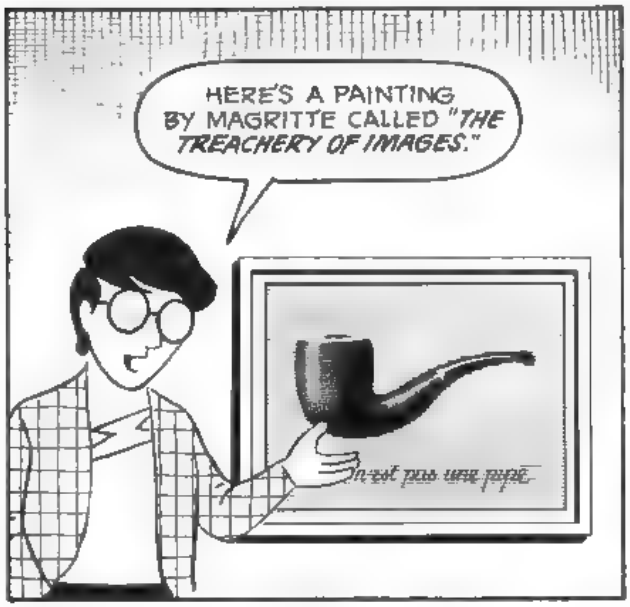
NO *SCHOOLS OF ART* ARE BANISHED BY OUR DEFINITION, NO *PHILOSOPHIES*, NO *MOVEMENTS*, NO *WAYS OF SEEING* ARE OUT OF BOUNDS!

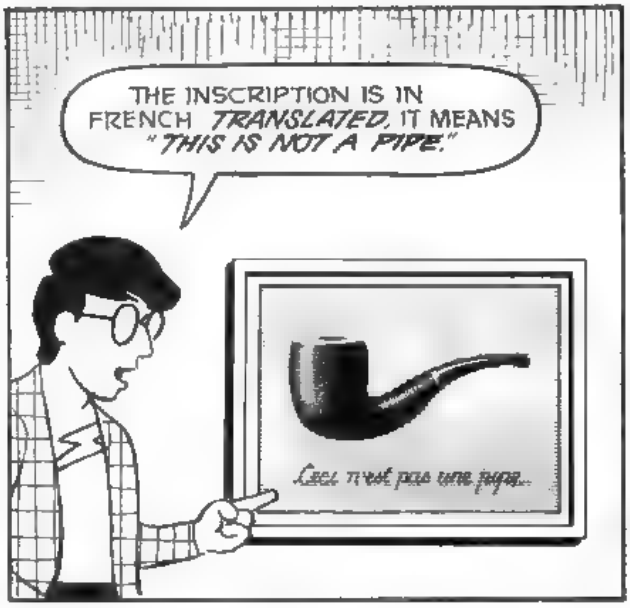
SEQUENTIAL ART

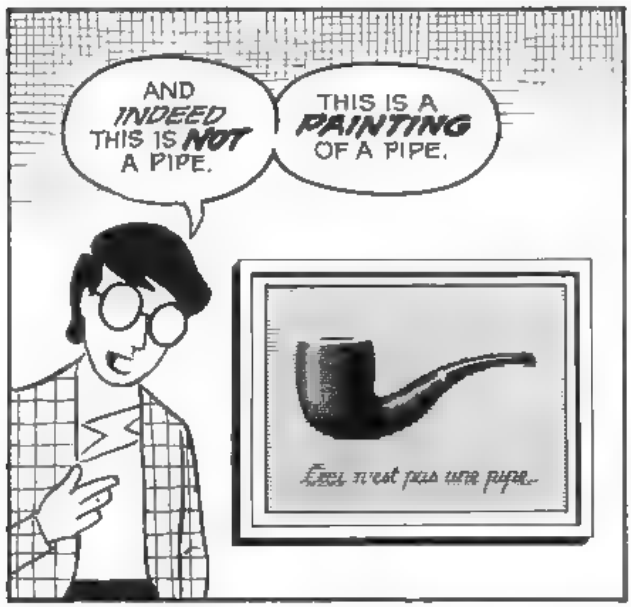
THOSE OF YOU WHO MAKE COMICS FOR A LIVING -- OR WOULD LIKE TO, SOMEDAY -- PROBABLY KNOW THAT KEEPING UP WITH ALL THE ADVANCES IN TODAY'S COMICS IS A FULL-TIME JOB.
THERE ARE SO MANY COMICS IN PRINT TODAY THAT IT WOULD TAKE AN ARMY OF READERS TO STUDY THEM ALL.
HOWEVER MUCH WE MAY TRY TO UNDERSTAND THE WORLD OF COMICS AROUND US, A PART OF THAT WORLD WILL ALWAYS LIE IN SHADOW -- A MYSTERY.
I'LL DO MY BEST IN THE FOLLOWING CHAPTERS TO SHED LIGHT ON THAT UNSEEN SIDE, BUT AS WE FOCUS ON THE WORLD OF COMICS AS IT IS, IT SHOULD BE KEPT IN MIND AT ALL TIMES THAT THIS WORLD IS ONLY ONE --
--OF MANY POSSIBLE WORLDS!
OUR ATTEMPTS TO DEFINE COMICS ARE AN ON-GOING PROCESS WHICH WON'T END ANYTIME SOON
A NEW GENERATION WILL NO DOUBT REJECT WHATEVER THIS ONE FINALLY DECIDES TO ACCEPT AND TRY ONCE MORE TO RE-INVENT COMICS.
AND SO THEY SHOULD
HERE'S TO THE GREAT DEBATE!

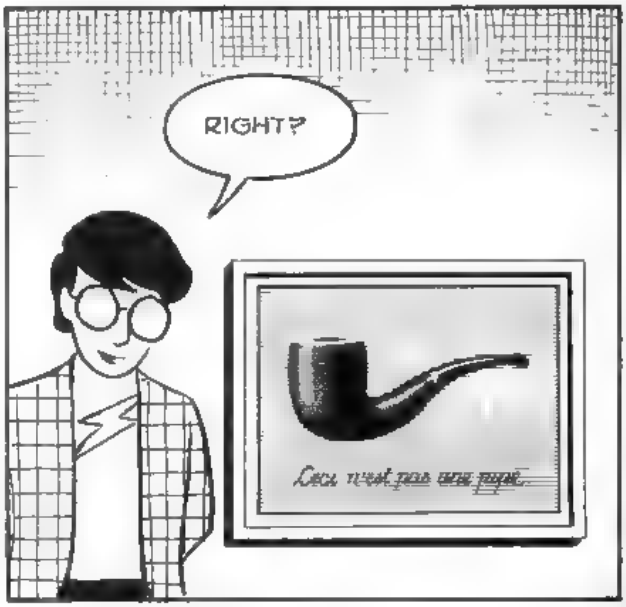
# CHAPTER TWO

## THE VOCABULARY OF COMICS.

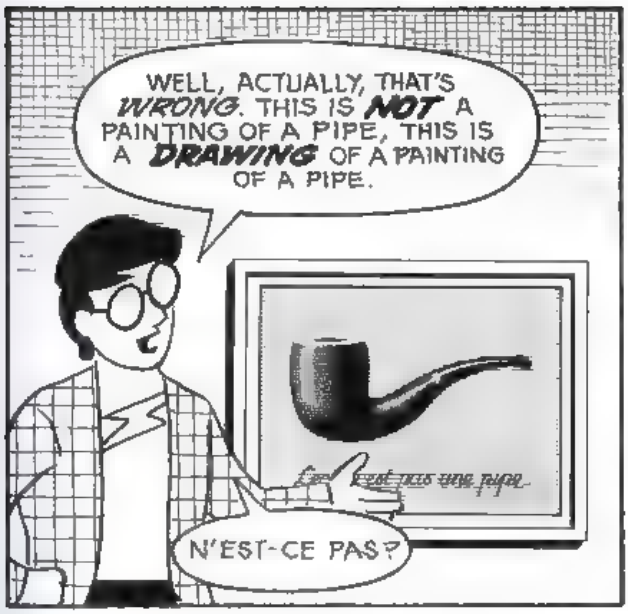


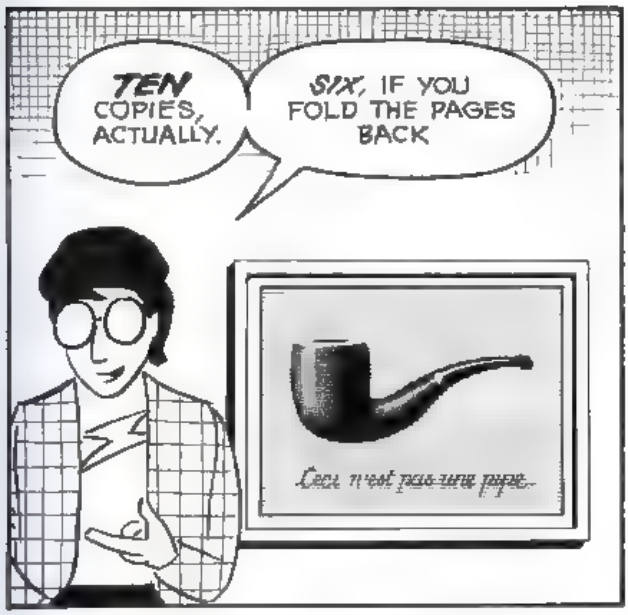



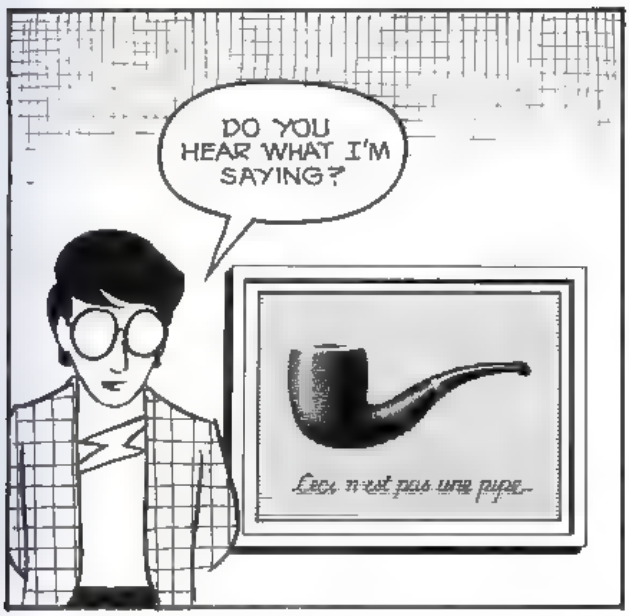

SEE PAGE 216 FOR MORE INFORMATION

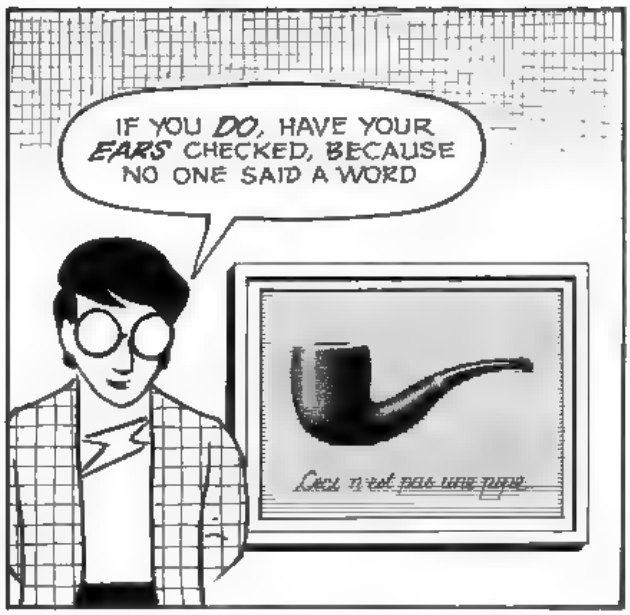

WELL, ACTUALLY, THAT'S *WRONG*. THIS IS ***NOT*** A PAINTING OF A PIPE, THIS IS A ***DRAWING*** OF A PAINTING OF A PIPE.
Ceci n'est pas une pipe.
N'EST-CE PAS?

NOPE. WRONG AGAIN. IT'S A ***PRINTED COPY*** OF A DRAWING OF A PAINTING OF A PIPE.
Ceci n'est pas une pipe.


***TEN*** COPIES, ACTUALLY.
*SIX*, IF YOU FOLD THE PAGES BACK
Ceci n'est pas une pipe.

Ceci n'est pas une pipe.


DO YOU HEAR WHAT I'M SAYING?
Ceci n'est pas une pipe.

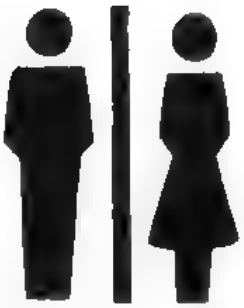

IF YOU ***DO***, HAVE YOUR ***EARS*** CHECKED, BECAUSE NO ONE SAID A WORD
Ceci n'est pas une pipe.

THIS IS NOT A MAN.

THESE ARE NOT IDEAS.

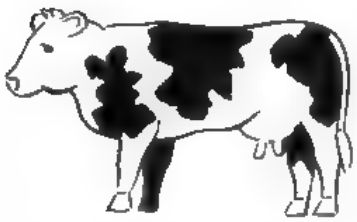
THIS IS NOT A COUNTRY.

THIS IS NOT A LEAF



THESE ARE NOT PEOPLE

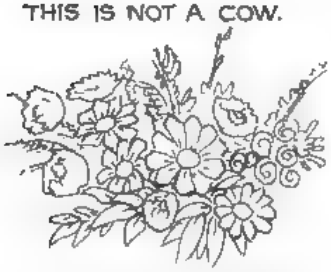
THIS IS NOT MUSIC.



THIS IS NOT A COW.

THIS IS NOT MY VOICE

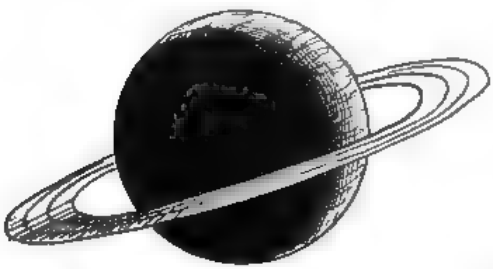
THIS IS NOT SOUND.



THESE ARE NOT FLOWERS.

THIS IS NOT ME.

THIS IS NOT LAW.



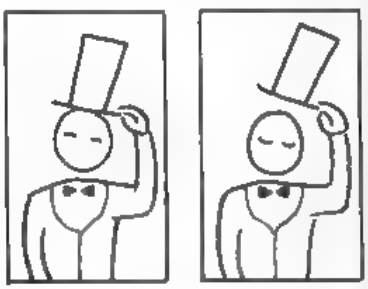
THIS IS NOT A PLANET.

THIS IS NOT FOOD.

THIS IS NOT A CAR.

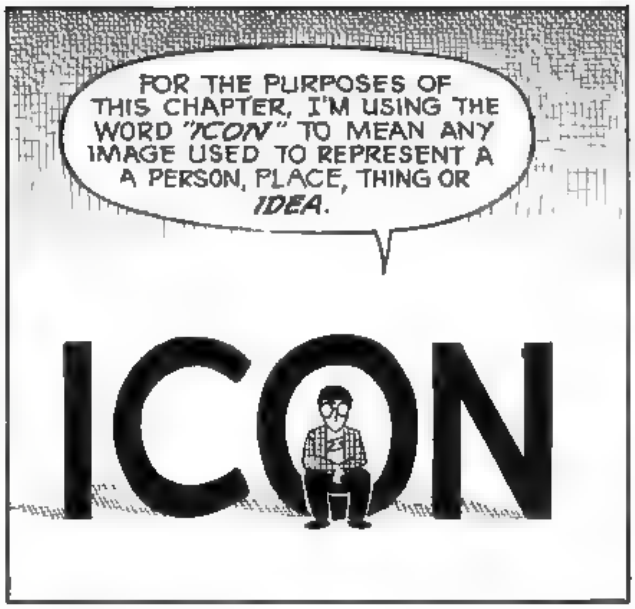
THIS IS NOT A COMPANY.

THIS IS NOT A FACE.



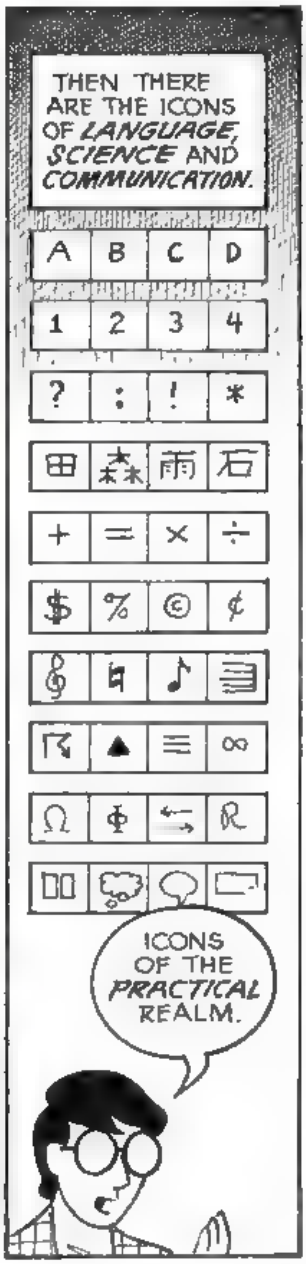
THESE ARE NOT SEPARATE MOMENTS.

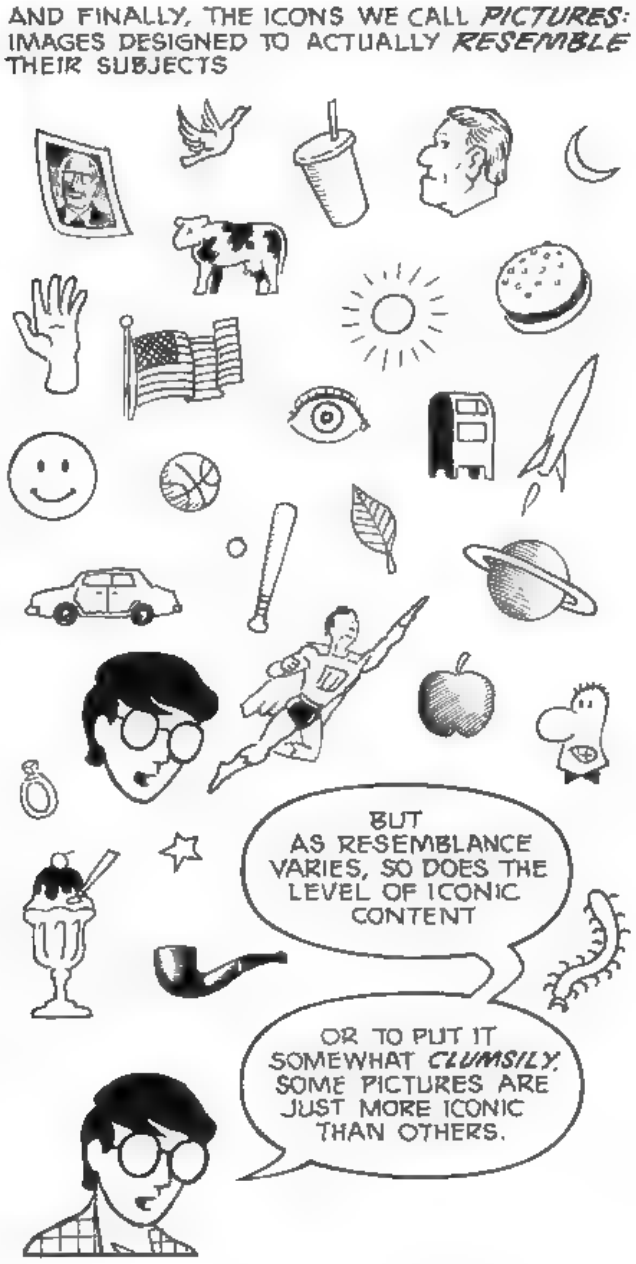
NOW, THE WORD ICON MEANS MANY THINGS.
THIS IS PAPER
THIS IS INK ON PAPER.

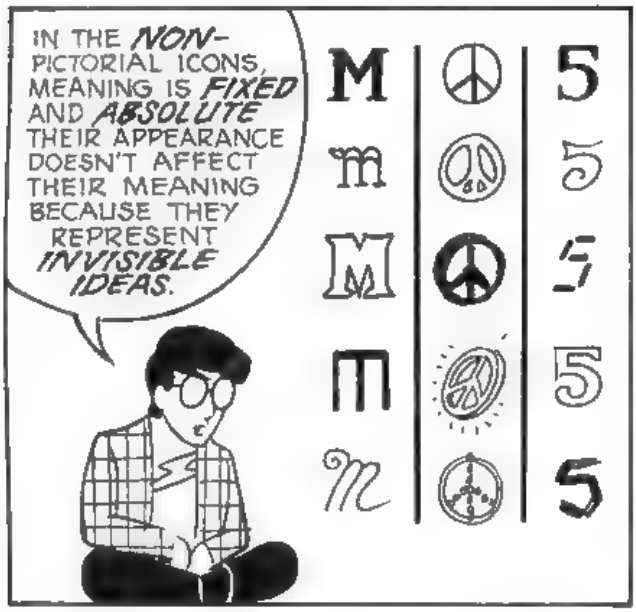

FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS CHAPTER, I'M USING THE WORD "ICON" TO MEAN ANY IMAGE USED TO REPRESENT A A PERSON, PLACE, THING OR IDEA.
ICON

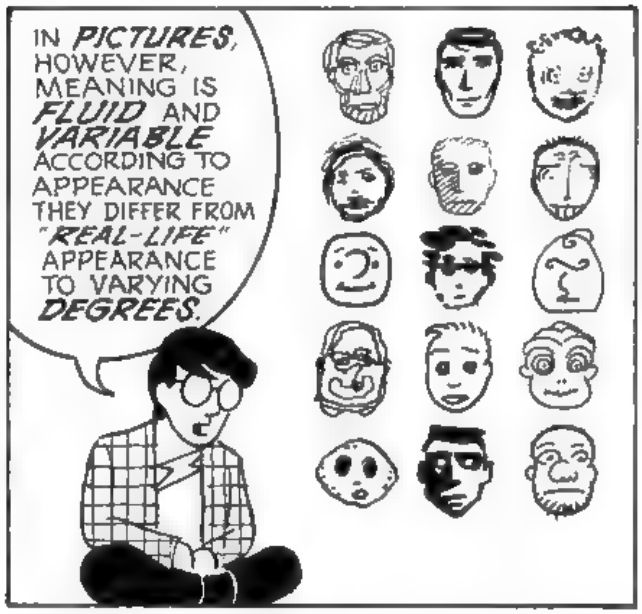
THAT'S A BIT BROADER THAN THE DEFINITION IN MY DICTIONARY, BUT IT'S THE CLOSEST THING TO WHAT I NEED HERE
"SYMBOL" IS A BIT TOO LOADED FOR ME.

THE SORTS OF IMAGES WE USUALLY CALL SYMBOLS ARE ONE CATEGORY OF ICON, HOWEVER
Exxon
THESE ARE THE IMAGES WE USE TO REPRESENT CONCEPTS, IDEAS AND PHILOSOPHIES.

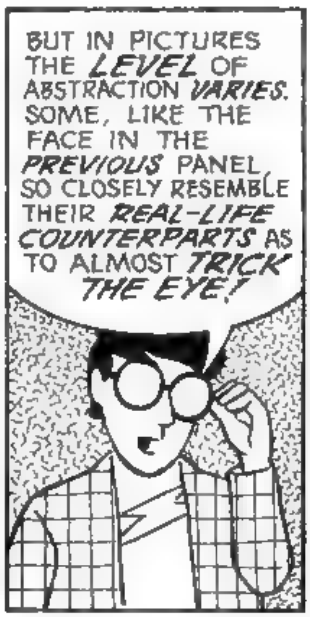

THEN THERE ARE THE ICONS OF LANGUAGE, SCIENCE AND COMMUNICATION.
A B C D
1 2 3 4
? : ! *
+ = × ÷
$ % © ¢
ICONS OF THE PRACTICAL REALM.


AND FINALLY, THE ICONS WE CALL PICTURES: IMAGES DESIGNED TO ACTUALLY RESEMBLE THEIR SUBJECTS
BUT AS RESEMBLANCE VARIES, SO DOES THE LEVEL OF ICONIC CONTENT
OR TO PUT IT SOMEWHAT CLUMSILY, SOME PICTURES ARE JUST MORE ICONIC THAN OTHERS.


IN THE NON-PICTORIAL ICONS, MEANING IS FIXED AND ABSOLUTE THEIR APPEARANCE DOESN'T AFFECT THEIR MEANING BECAUSE THEY REPRESENT INVISIBLE IDEAS.

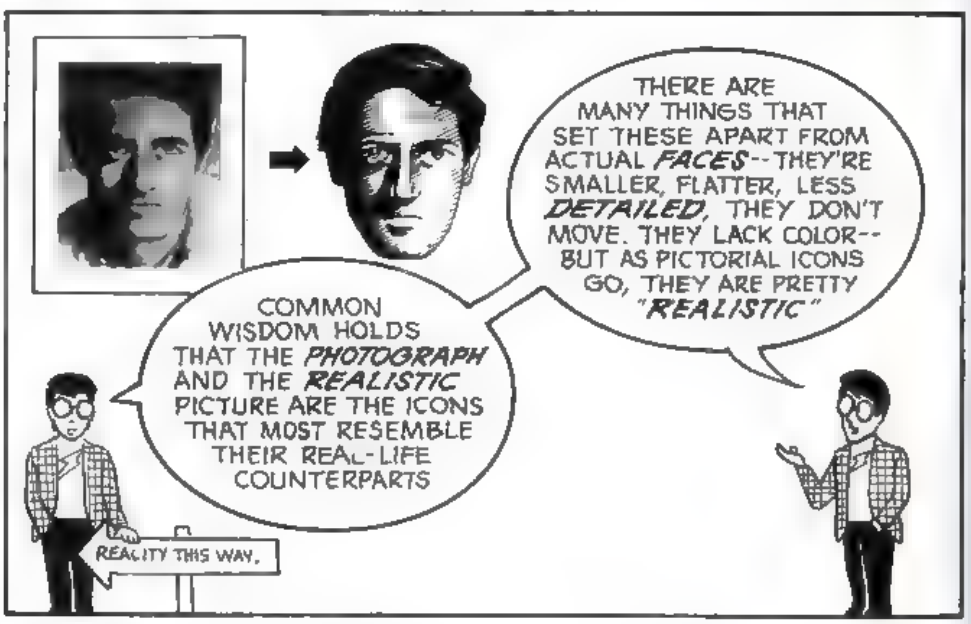

IN PICTURES, HOWEVER, MEANING IS FLUID AND VARIABLE ACCORDING TO APPEARANCE THEY DIFFER FROM "REAL-LIFE" APPEARANCE TO VARYING DEGREES.

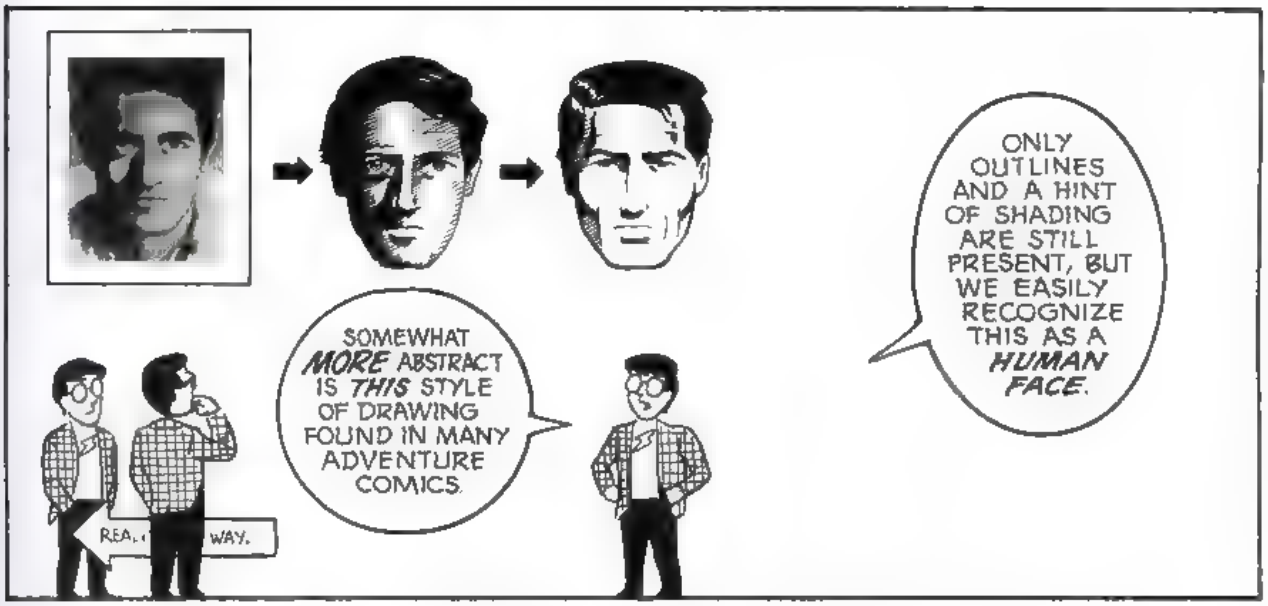
WORDS ARE TOTALLY ABSTRACT ICONS. THAT IS, THEY BEAR NO RESEMBLANCE AT ALL TO THE REAL McCOY
EYE

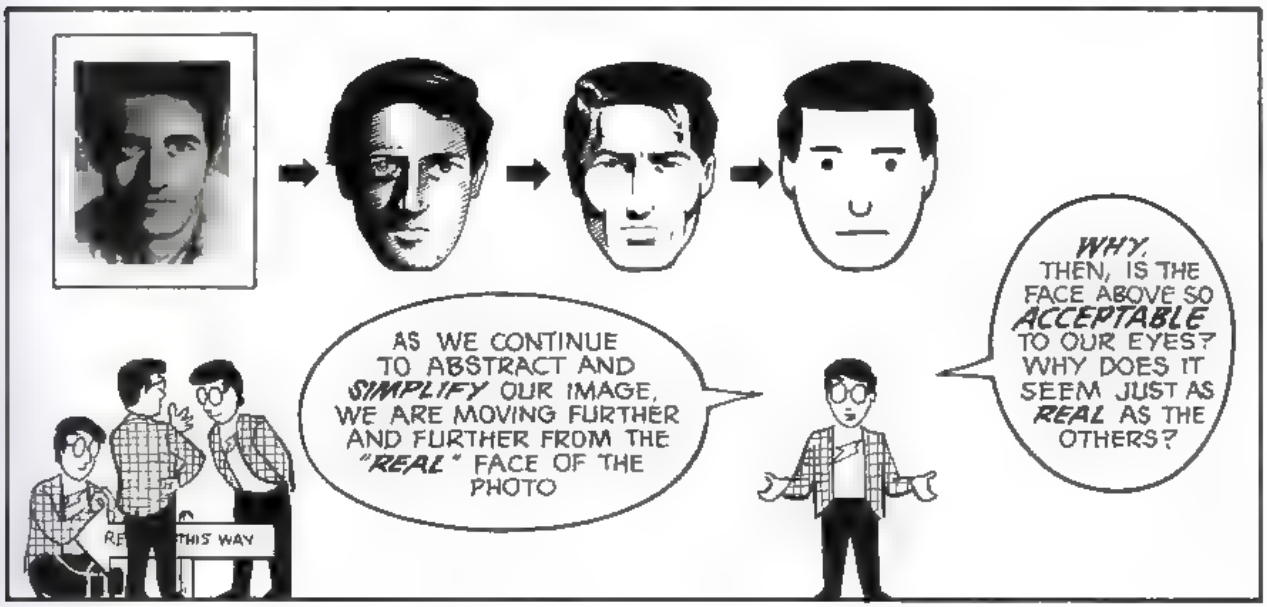

BUT IN PICTURES THE LEVEL OF ABSTRACTION VARIES. SOME, LIKE THE FACE IN THE PREVIOUS PANEL, SO CLOSELY RESEMBLE THEIR REAL-LIFE COUNTERPARTS AS TO ALMOST TRICK THE EYE!

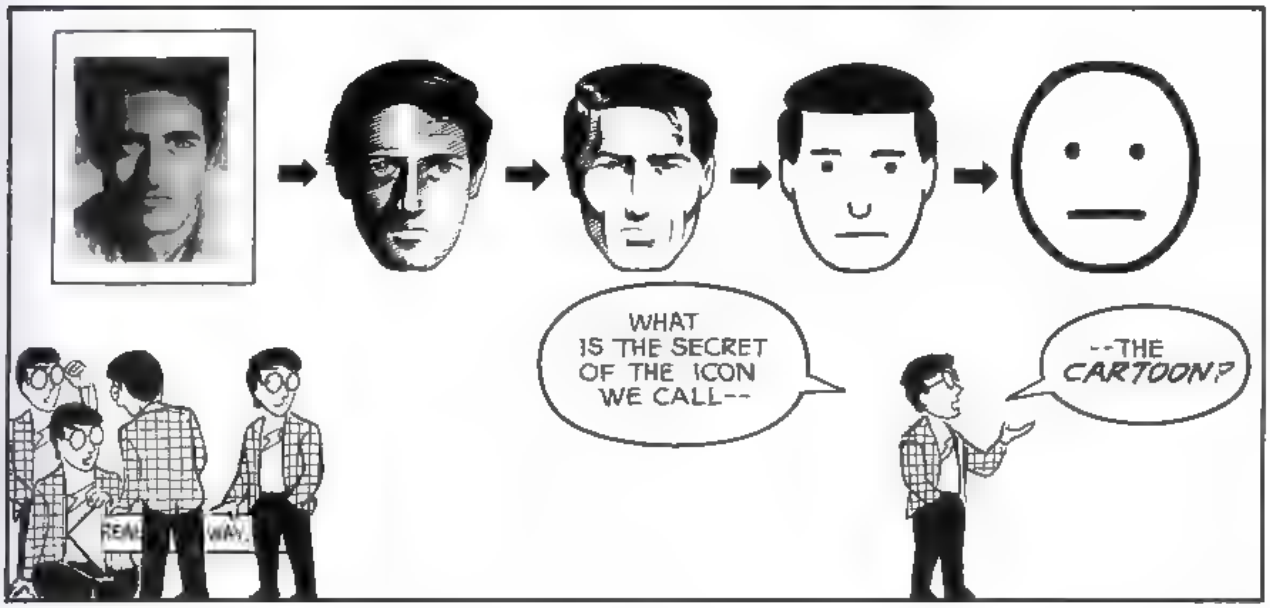
OTHERS, LIKE YOURS TRULY, ARE QUITE A BIT MORE ABSTRACT AND, IN FACT, ARE VERY MUCH UNLIKE ANY HUMAN FACE YOU'VE EVER SEEN!

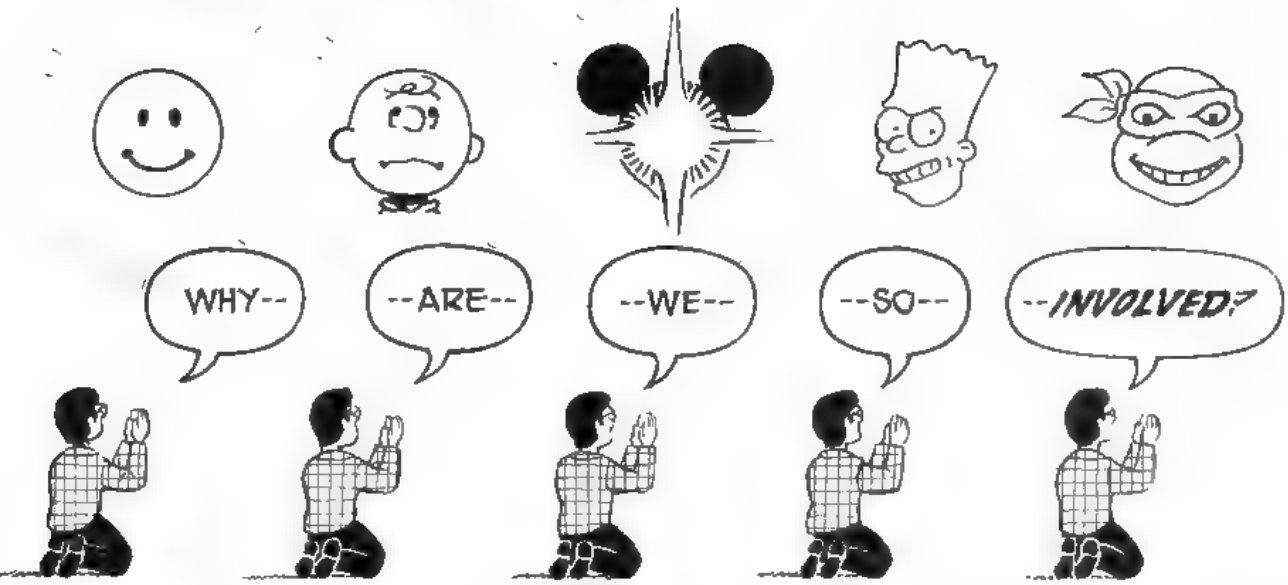
LET'S SEE IF WE CAN PUT THESE PICTORIAL ICONS IN SOME SORT OF ORDER

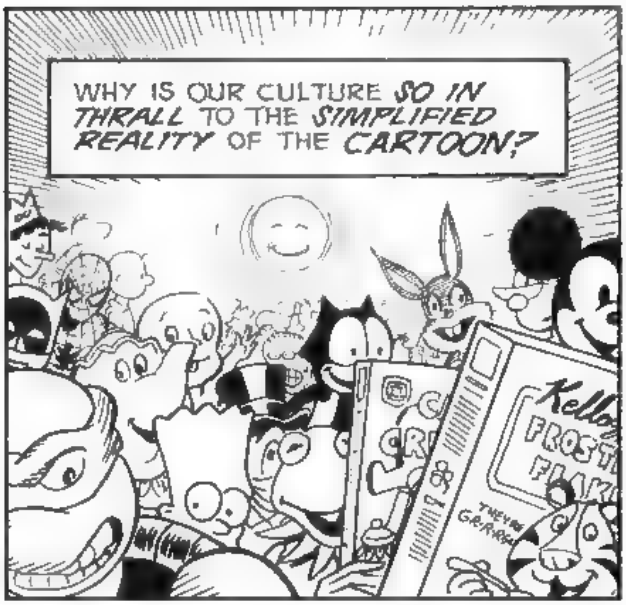

COMMON WISDOM HOLDS THAT THE PHOTOGRAPH AND THE REALISTIC PICTURE ARE THE ICONS THAT MOST RESEMBLE THEIR REAL-LIFE COUNTERPARTS
THERE ARE MANY THINGS THAT SET THESE APART FROM ACTUAL FACES--THEY'RE SMALLER, FLATTER, LESS DETAILED, THEY DON'T MOVE. THEY LACK COLOR--BUT AS PICTORIAL ICONS GO, THEY ARE PRETTY "REALISTIC"
REALITY THIS WAY.


ONLY OUTLINES AND A HINT OF SHADING ARE STILL PRESENT, BUT WE EASILY RECOGNIZE THIS AS A HUMAN FACE.
SOMEWHAT MORE ABSTRACT IS THIS STYLE OF DRAWING FOUND IN MANY ADVENTURE COMICS.
REA.. WAY.


WHY, THEN, IS THE FACE ABOVE SO ACCEPTABLE TO OUR EYES? WHY DOES IT SEEM JUST AS REAL AS THE OTHERS?
AS WE CONTINUE TO ABSTRACT AND SIMPLIFY OUR IMAGE, WE ARE MOVING FURTHER AND FURTHER FROM THE "REAL" FACE OF THE PHOTO
THIS WAY


--THE CARTOON?
WHAT IS THE SECRET OF THE ICON WE CALL--
REAL WAY.



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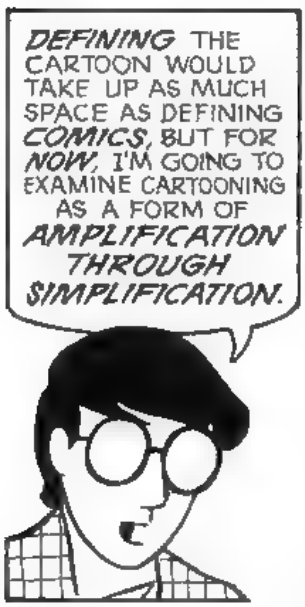
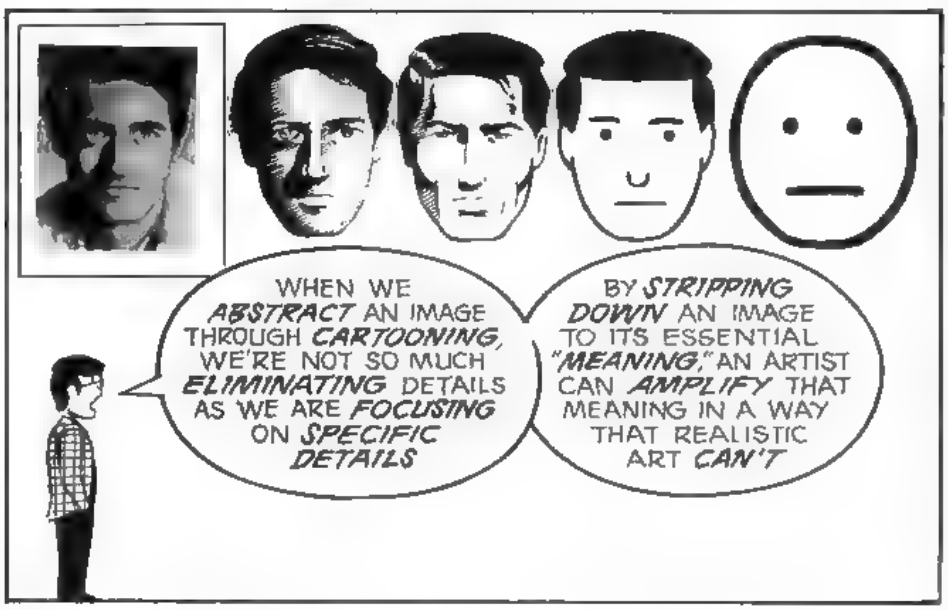

DEFINING THE CARTOON WOULD TAKE UP AS MUCH SPACE AS DEFINING COMICS, BUT FOR NOW, I'M GOING TO EXAMINE CARTOONING AS A FORM OF AMPLIFICATION THROUGH SIMPLIFICATION.


WHEN WE ABSTRACT AN IMAGE THROUGH CARTOONING, WE'RE NOT SO MUCH ELIMINATING DETAILS AS WE ARE FOCUSING ON SPECIFIC DETAILS
BY STRIPPING DOWN AN IMAGE TO ITS ESSENTIAL "MEANING," AN ARTIST CAN AMPLIFY THAT MEANING IN A WAY THAT REALISTIC ART CAN'T

FILM CRITICS WILL SOMETIMES DESCRIBE A *LIVE-ACTION* FILM AS A "CARTOON" TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE STRIPPED-DOWN *INTENSITY* OF A SIMPLE STORY OR VISUAL STYLE

THOUGH THE TERM IS OFTEN USED *DISPARAGINGLY*, IT CAN BE EQUALLY WELL APPLIED TO MANY *TIME-TESTED CLASSICS*. SIMPLIFYING CHARACTERS AND IMAGES TOWARD A *PURPOSE* CAN BE AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR STORYTELLING IN *ANY* MEDIUM.

CARTOONING ISN'T JUST A WAY OF *DRAWING*, IT'S A WAY OF *SEEING!*

FOLLOW! FOLLOW!

THE ABILITY OF CARTOONS TO *FOCUS* OUR ATTENTION ON AN IDEA IS, I THINK, AN IMPORTANT PART OF THEIR SPECIAL POWER, BOTH IN COMICS AND IN DRAWING GENERALLY.

ONE

A FEW

THOUSANDS

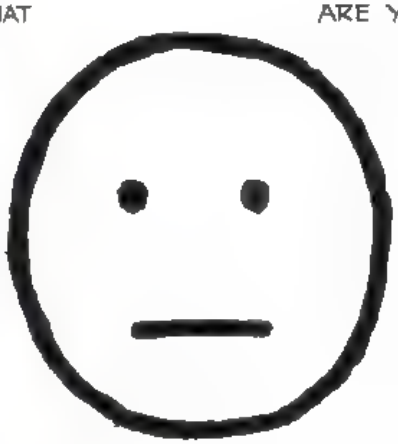
MILLIONS

(NEARLY) ALL

ANOTHER IS THE *UNIVERSALITY* OF CARTOON IMAGERY. THE MORE CARTOONY A FACE IS, FOR INSTANCE, THE MORE PEOPLE IT COULD BE SAID TO *DESCRIBE*.

BUT I BELIEVE THERE'S SOMETHING *MORE* AT WORK IN OUR MINDS WHEN WE VIEW A CARTOON - ESPECIALLY OF A HUMAN FACE -- WHICH WARRANTS FURTHER INVESTIGATION.

WHAT ARE YOU



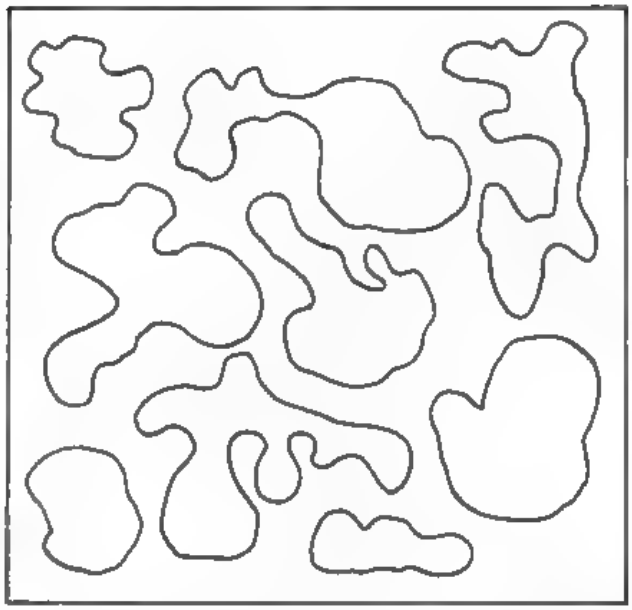
REALLY SEEING?

THE FACT THAT YOUR MIND IS *CAPABLE* OF TAKING A *CIRCLE, TWO DOTS* AND A *LINE* AND TURNING THEM INTO A *FACE* IS NOTHING SHORT OF *INCREDIBLE!*

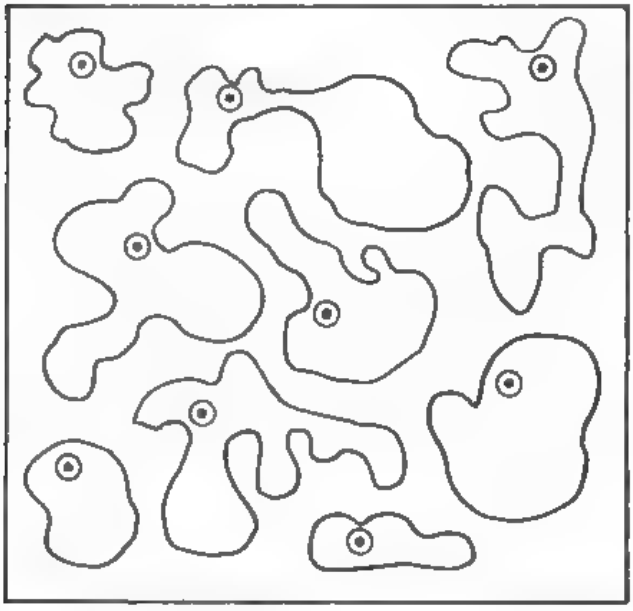
BUT STILL *MORE* INCREDIBLE IS THE FACT THAT YOU CANNOT *AVOID* SEEING A FACE HERE. YOUR MIND WON'T *LET* YOU!

ASK A FRIEND TO DRAW YOU SOME SHAPES ON A PIECE OF PAPER. THEY SHOULD BE *CLOSED CURVES*, BUT *OTHERWISE* CAN BE AS *WEIRD* AND *IRREGULAR* AS HE OR SHE *WANTS*.

LET'S SAY THE RESULTS LOOK SOMETHING LIKE *THIS*

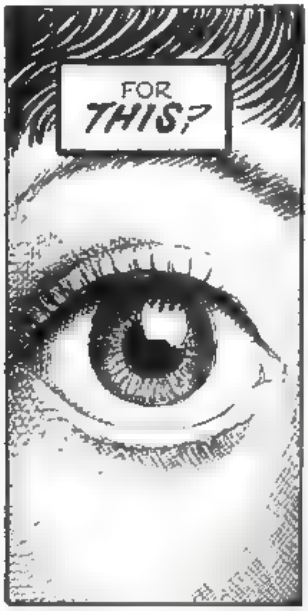


*NOW*- YOU'LL FIND THAT NO MATTER WHAT THEY *LOOK* LIKE, EVERY SINGLE *ONE* OF THOSE SHAPES *CAN* BE MADE INTO A FACE WITH ONE SIMPLE ADDITION

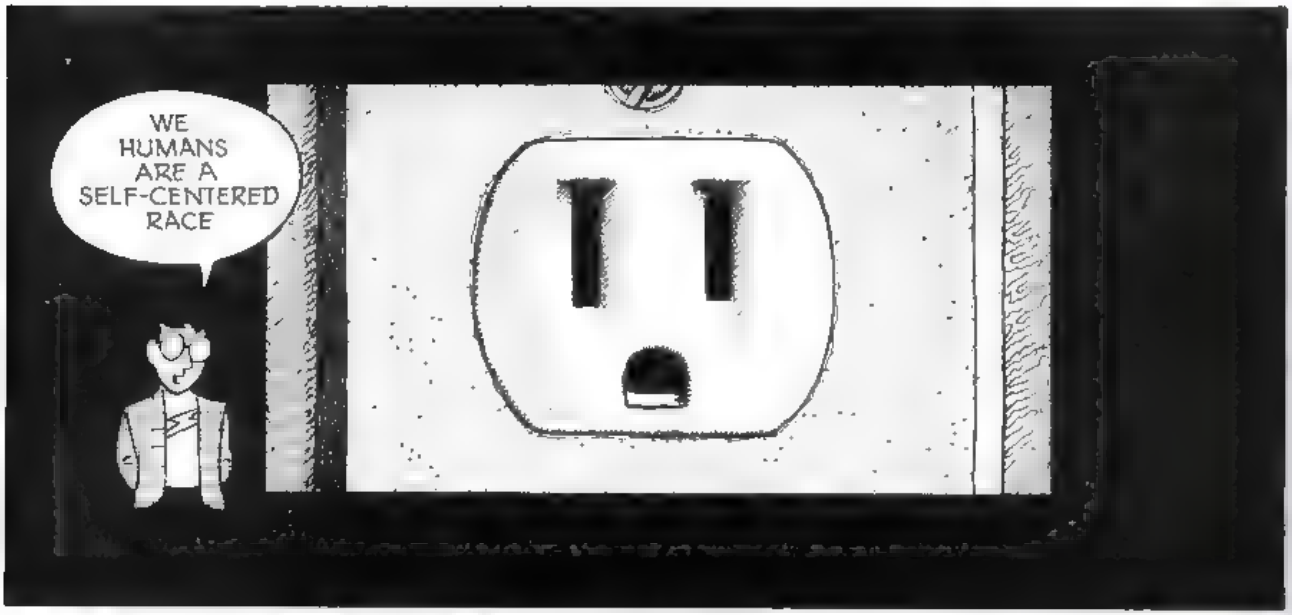


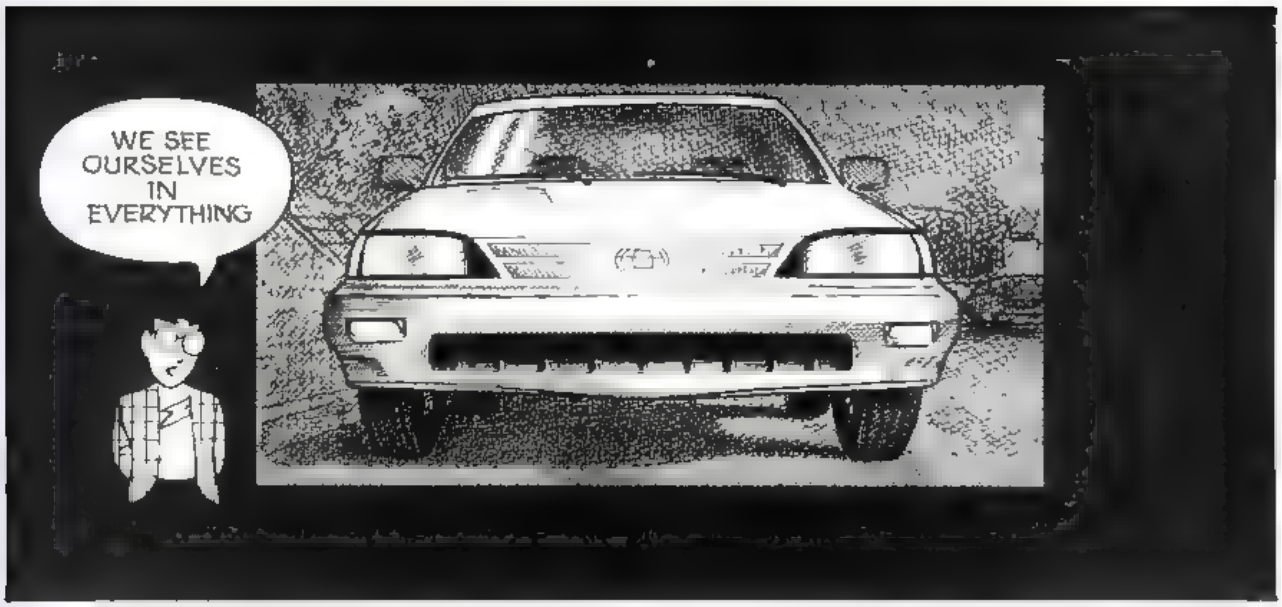
YOUR MIND HAS NO TROUBLE AT ALL CONVERTING SUCH SHAPES INTO FACES, YET WOULD IT EVER MISTAKE *THIS*--

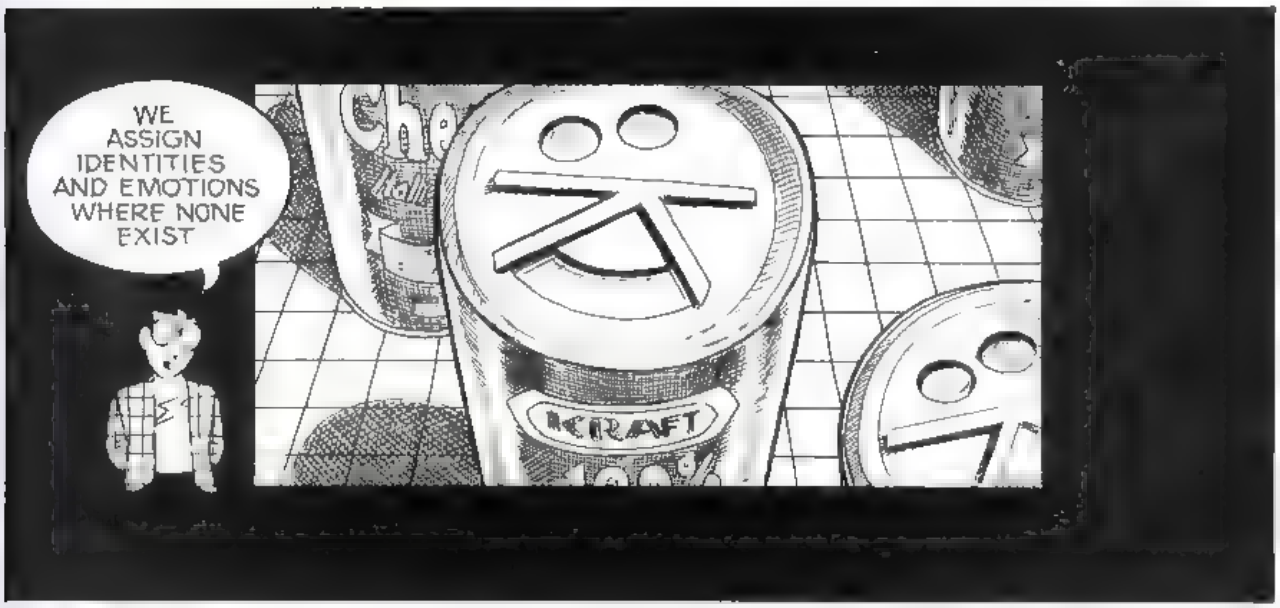
FOR *THIS*?

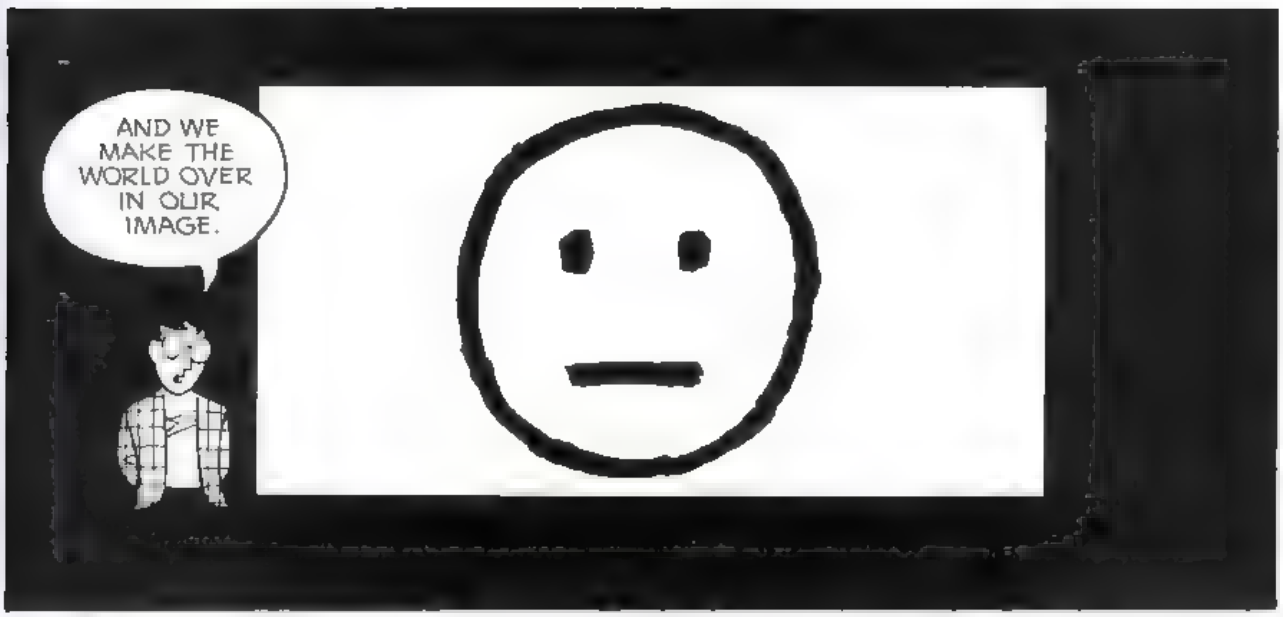


WE HUMANS ARE A SELF-CENTERED RACE




WE SEE OURSELVES IN EVERYTHING


WE ASSIGN IDENTITIES AND EMOTIONS WHERE NONE EXIST
KRAFT


AND WE MAKE THE WORLD OVER IN OUR IMAGE.

THINK OF YOUR FACE AS A MASK
THAT'S WHAT IT *IS*, AFTER ALL
A MASK
FACING *OUTWARD*
WORN FROM THE DAY YOU WERE BORN
SLAVE TO YOUR EVERY MENTAL COMMAND
SEEN BY EVERYONE YOU MEET
BUT NEVER BY *YOU*
OPEN ITS EYES NOW
JUST *THINK* IT THE MASK WILL OBEY

ALL SET?
GOOD
NOW, SMILE
C'MON, NOBODY'S LOOKING
GOOD. NOW, WHAT CHANGED WHEN YOU SMILED? WHAT DID YOU SEE?
NOTHING RIGHT.
YET, YOU KNOW YOU SMILED! NOT JUST BECAUSE YOU FELT YOUR CHEEKS COMPRESS OR THE CRINKLING AROUND YOUR EYES!
YOU KNOW YOU SMILED BECAUSE YOU TRUSTED THIS MASK CALLED YOUR FACE TO RESPOND!
BUT THE FACE YOU SEE IN YOUR MIND IS NOT THE SAME AS OTHERS SEE!
WHEN TWO PEOPLE INTERRACT, THEY USUALLY LOOK DIRECTLY AT ONE ANOTHER, SEEING THEIR PARTNER'S FEATURES IN VIVID DETAIL.

EACH ONE *ALSO* SUSTAINS A CONSTANT AWARENESS OF HIS OR HER *OWN* FACE, BUT *THIS* MIND-PICTURE IS NOT NEARLY SO VIVID; JUST A SKETCHY ARRANGEMENT . A SENSE OF SHAPE... A SENSE OF *GENERAL PLACEMENT.*

SOMETHING AS *SIMPLE* AND AS *BASIC*--

--AS A *CARTOON.*

THUS, WHEN YOU LOOK AT A PHOTO OR REALISTIC DRAWING OF A FACE--

--YOU SEE IT AS THE FACE OF *ANOTHER.*

BUT WHEN YOU ENTER THE WORLD OF THE *CARTOON*--

--YOU SEE *YOURSELF.*

I BELIEVE THIS IS THE *PRIMARY CAUSE* OF OUR CHILDHOOD FASCINATION WITH *CARTOONS,* THOUGH OTHER FACTORS SUCH AS *UNIVERSAL IDENTIFICATION, SIMPLICITY* AND THE *CHILDLIKE FEATURES* OF MANY CARTOON CHARACTERS ALSO PLAY A PART.

THE CARTOON IS A *VACUUM* INTO WHICH OUR *IDENTITY* AND *AWARENESS* ARE *PULLED.*.

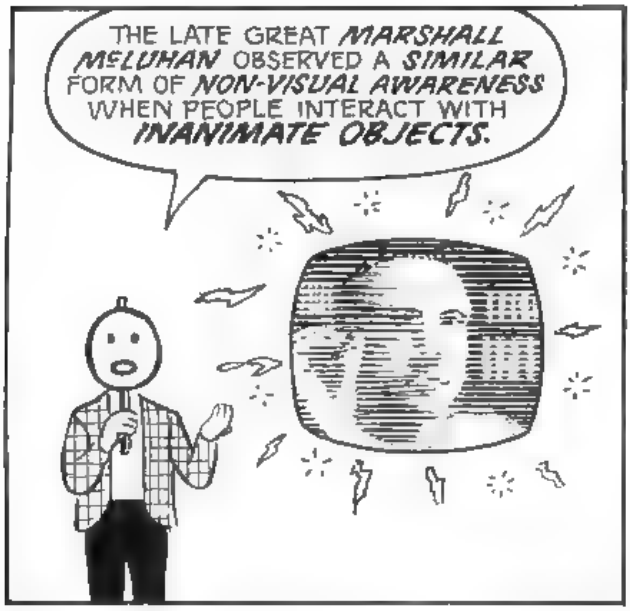
..AN *EMPTY SHELL* THAT WE INHABIT WHICH *ENABLES* US TO TRAVEL IN *ANOTHER REALM.*

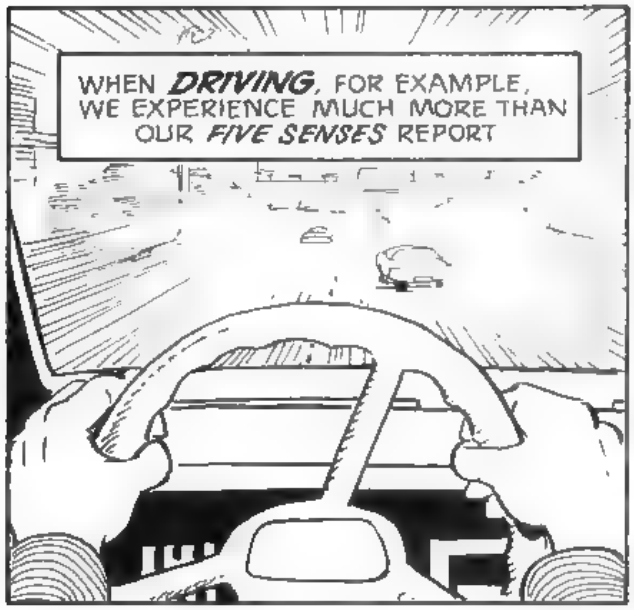
WE DON'T JUST *OBSERVE* THE CARTOON, WE *BECOME* IT!

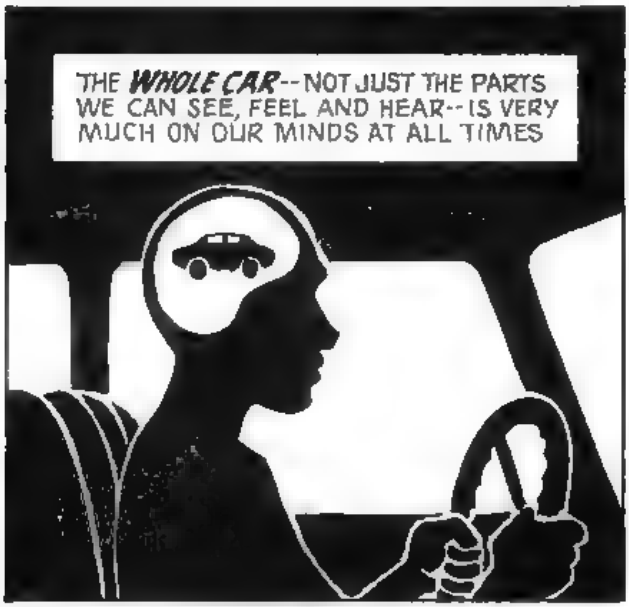
THAT'S WHY I DECIDED TO *DRAW* MYSELF IN SUCH A SIMPLE *STYLE.*

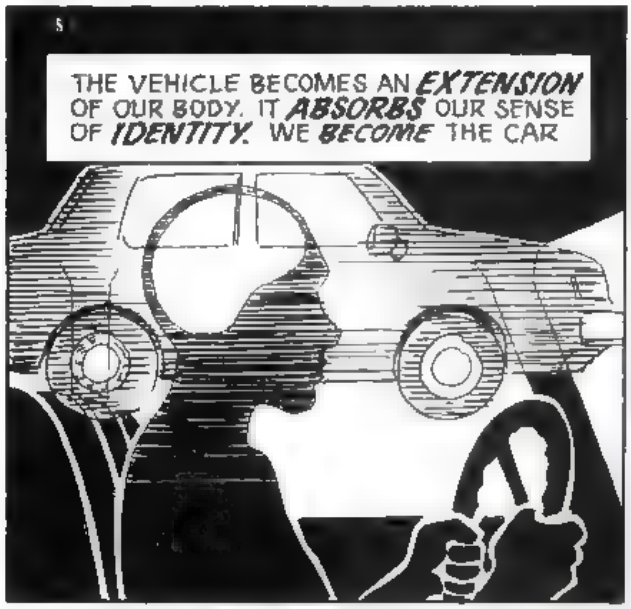
WOULD YOU HAVE *LISTENED* TO ME IF I LOOKED LIKE *THIS*?!?

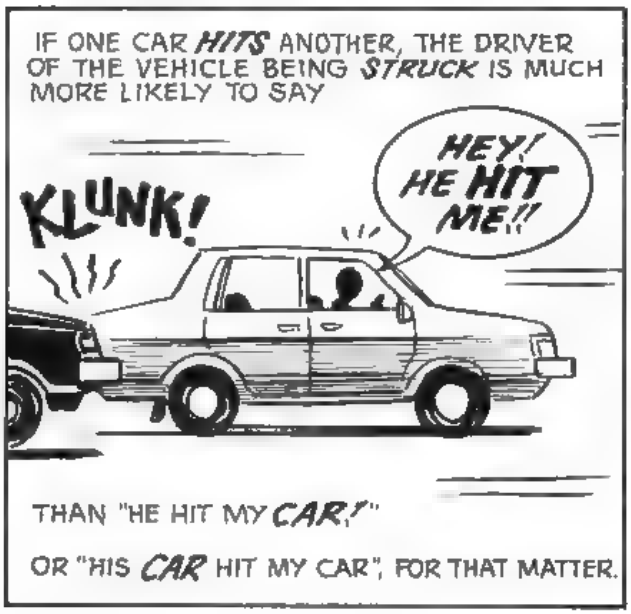
I DOUBT IT! YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN FAR TOO AWARE OF THE MESSENGER TO FULLY RECEIVE THE MESSAGE!
APART FROM WHAT LITTLE I TOLD YOU ABOUT MYSELF IN CHAPTER ONE, I'M PRACTICALLY A BLANK SLATE!
IT WOULD NEVER EVEN OCCUR TO YOU TO WONDER WHAT MY POLITICS ARE, OR WHAT I HAD FOR LUNCH OR WHERE I GOT THIS SILLY OUTFIT!
I'M JUST A LITTLE VOICE INSIDE YOUR HEAD.
A CONCEPT.
YOU GIVE ME LIFE BY READING THIS BOOK AND BY "FILLING UP" THIS VERY ICONIC (CARTOONY) FORM.
WHO I AM IS IRRELEVANT. I'M JUST A LITTLE PIECE OF YOU.
BUT IF WHO I AM MATTERS LESS, MAYBE WHAT I SAY WILL MATTER MORE.
THAT'S THE THEORY, ANYWAY
SO FAR, WE'VE ONLY DISCUSSED FACES, BUT THE PHENOMENON OF NON-VISUAL SELF-AWARENESS CAN, TO A LESSER DEGREE, STILL APPLY TO OUR WHOLE BODIES. AFTER ALL, DO WE NEED TO SEE OUR HANDS TO KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOING?
THERE'S MORE, TOO!

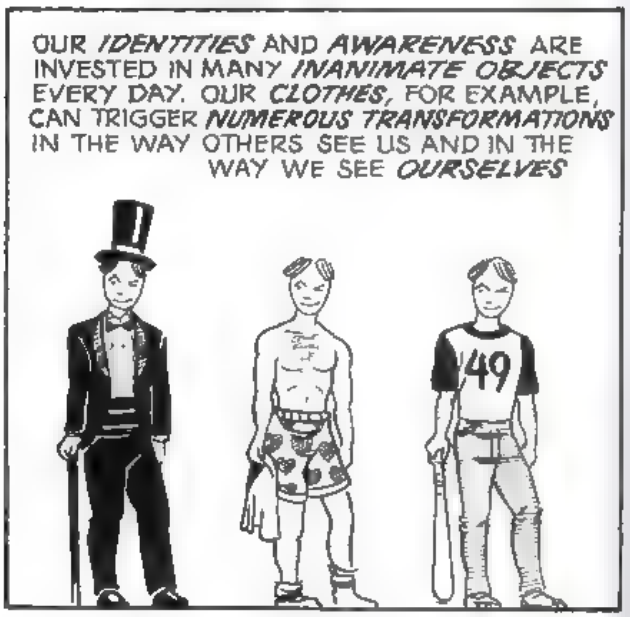

THE LATE GREAT MARSHALL McLUHAN OBSERVED A SIMILAR FORM OF NON-VISUAL AWARENESS WHEN PEOPLE INTERACT WITH INANIMATE OBJECTS.


WHEN DRIVING, FOR EXAMPLE, WE EXPERIENCE MUCH MORE THAN OUR FIVE SENSES REPORT


THE WHOLE CAR--NOT JUST THE PARTS WE CAN SEE, FEEL AND HEAR--IS VERY MUCH ON OUR MINDS AT ALL TIMES


THE VEHICLE BECOMES AN EXTENSION OF OUR BODY. IT ABSORBS OUR SENSE OF IDENTITY. WE BECOME THE CAR


IF ONE CAR HITS ANOTHER, THE DRIVER OF THE VEHICLE BEING STRUCK IS MUCH MORE LIKELY TO SAY
KLUNK!
HEY! HE HIT ME!!
THAN "HE HIT MY CAR!"
OR "HIS CAR HIT MY CAR", FOR THAT MATTER.


OUR IDENTITIES AND AWARENESS ARE INVESTED IN MANY INANIMATE OBJECTS EVERY DAY. OUR CLOTHES, FOR EXAMPLE, CAN TRIGGER NUMEROUS TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE WAY OTHERS SEE US AND IN THE WAY WE SEE OURSELVES
49

OUR ABILITY TO *EXTEND* OUR IDENTITIES INTO INANIMATE OBJECTS CAN CAUSE PIECES OF WOOD TO BECOME *LEGS*...
PIECES OF METAL TO BECOME *HANDS*...
PIECES OF PLASTIC TO BECOME *EARS*...
PIECES OF GLASS TO BECOME *EYES*.
AND IN *EVERY CASE*, OUR CONSTANT AWARENESS OF *SELF*--
--FLOWS *OUTWARD* TO INCLUDE THE OBJECT OF OUR *EXTENDED IDENTITY*.
AND JUST AS OUR AWARENESS OF OUR *BIOLOGICAL* SELVES ARE *SIMPLIFIED CONCEPTUALIZED IMAGES*--
--SO TOO IS OUR AWARENESS OF *THESE* EXTENSIONS GREATLY *SIMPLIFIED*
ALL THE THINGS WE *EXPERIENCE* IN LIFE CAN BE SEPARATED INTO *TWO REALMS*, THE *REALM OF THE CONCEPT*--
--AND THE REALM OF THE *SENSES*.

OUR IDENTITIES BELONG PERMANENTLY TO THE CONCEPTUAL WORLD THEY CAN'T BE SEEN, HEARD, SMELLED, TOUCHED OR TASTED THEY RE MERELY IDEAS AND EVERYTHING ELSE--AT THE START--BELONGS TO THE SENSUAL WORLD, THE WORLD OUTSIDE OF US
GRADUALLY WE REACH BEYOND OURSELVES
WE ENCOUNTER THE SIGHT, SMELL, TOUCH, TASTE AND SOUND OF OUR OWN BODIES.
AND OF THE WORLD AROUND US
AND SOON WE DISCOVER THAT OBJECTS OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD CAN ALSO CROSS OVER--
--AND POSSESS IDENTITIES OF THEIR OWN
OR, AS OUR EXTENSIONS
BEGIN TO GLOW-
WITH THE LIFE

- WE *LEND* TO THEM

BY DE-EMPHASIZING THE *APPEARANCE* OF THE *PHYSICAL* WORLD IN FAVOR OF THE *IDEA* OF FORM, THE CARTOON PLACES ITSELF IN THE WORLD OF *CONCEPTS*

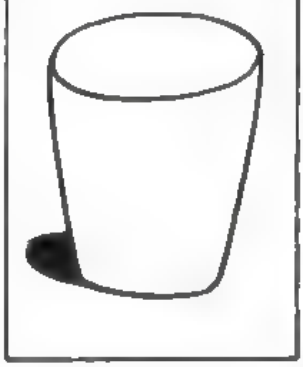
THROUGH TRADITIONAL *REALISM*, THE COMICS ARTIST CAN PORTRAY THE WORLD *WITHOUT*--

--AND THROUGH THE *CARTOON*, THE WORLD *WITHIN*.

WHEN CARTOONS ARE USED *THROUGHOUT* A STORY, THE *WORLD* OF THAT STORY MAY SEEM TO *PULSE WITH LIFE*.

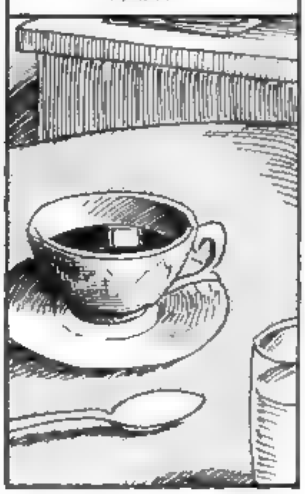
INANIMATE OBJECTS MAY SEEM TO POSSESS *SEPARATE IDENTITIES* SO THAT IF ONE *JUMPED UP* AND STARTED *SINGING* IT WOULDN'T FEEL OUT OF PLACE

BUT IN EMPHASIZING THE *CONCEPTS* OF OBJECTS OVER THEIR *PHYSICAL APPEARANCE*, MUCH HAS TO BE *OMITTED*

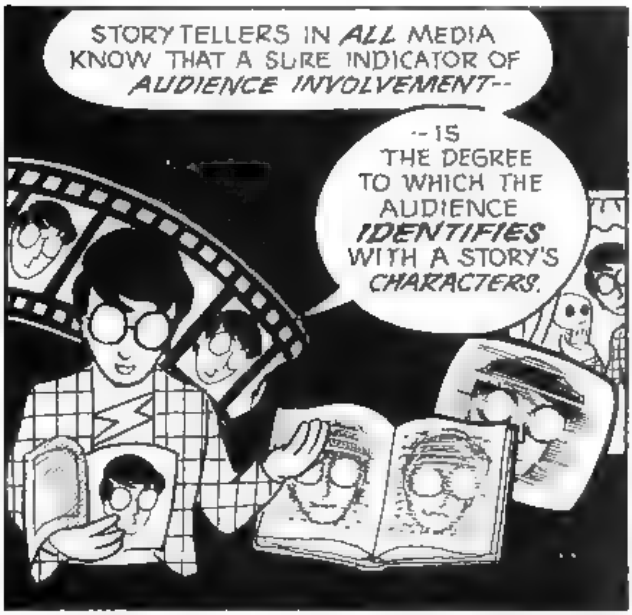


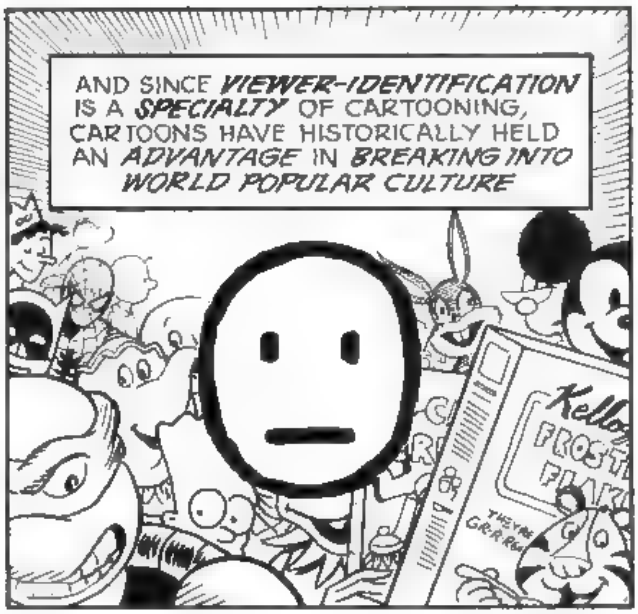
IF AN ARTIST WANTS TO PORTRAY THE BEAUTY AND COMPLEXITY OF THE *PHYSICAL WORLD*--

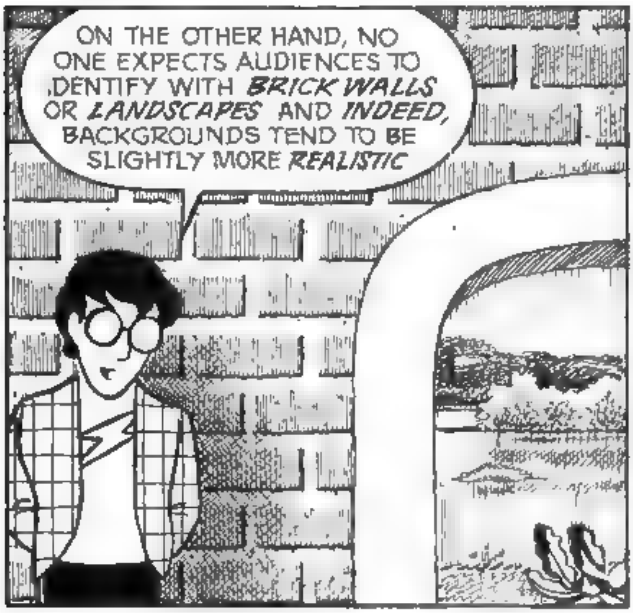
--REALISM OF *SOME* SORT IS GOING TO PLAY A PART



WHEN DRAWING THE FACE AND FIGURE, NEARLY *ALL* COMICS ARTISTS APPLY AT LEAST *SOME* SMALL MEASURE OF CARTOONING EVEN THE MORE REALISTIC *ADVENTURE* ARTISTS--


STORYTELLERS IN *ALL* MEDIA KNOW THAT A SURE INDICATOR OF *AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT*--
--IS THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE AUDIENCE *IDENTIFIES* WITH A STORY'S *CHARACTERS.*


AND SINCE *VIEWER-IDENTIFICATION* IS A *SPECIALTY* OF CARTOONING, CARTOONS HAVE HISTORICALLY HELD AN *ADVANTAGE* IN *BREAKING INTO WORLD POPULAR CULTURE*


ON THE OTHER HAND, NO ONE EXPECTS AUDIENCES TO IDENTIFY WITH *BRICK WALLS* OR *LANDSCAPES* AND *INDEED,* BACKGROUNDS TEND TO BE SLIGHTLY MORE *REALISTIC*

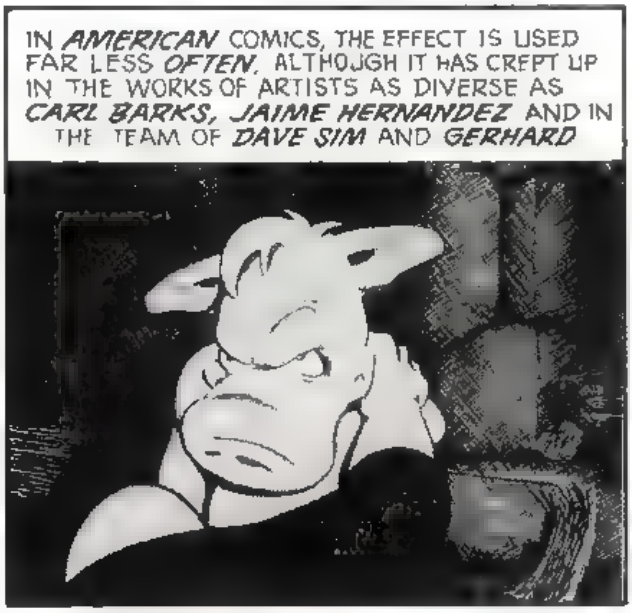
IN *SOME* COMICS, THIS SPLIT IS FAR MORE *PRONOUNCED.* THE BELGIAN *"CLEAR-LINE"* STYLE OF HERGÉS *TINTIN* COMBINES VERY ICONIC CHARACTERS WITH UNUSUALLY *REALISTIC* BACKGROUNDS



TINTIN © EDITIONS CASTERMAN.

THIS COMBINATION ALLOWS READERS TO *MASK* THEMSELVES IN A CHARACTER AND SAFELY ENTER A SENSUALLY STIMULATING WORLD

IN THE WORLD OF *ANIMATION*, WHERE THE EFFECT HAPPENS TO BE A PRACTICAL *NECESSITY*, DISNEY HAS USED IT WITH IMPRESSIVE RESULTS FOR OVER *50 YEARS!*


IN *AMERICAN* COMICS, THE EFFECT IS USED FAR LESS *OFTEN*, ALTHOUGH IT HAS CREPT UP IN THE WORKS OF ARTISTS AS DIVERSE AS *CARL BARKS*, *JAIME HERNANDEZ* AND IN THE TEAM OF *DAVE SIM* AND *GERHARD*
CEREBUS © DAVE SIM

THANKS TO THE *SEMINAL INFLUENCE* OF COMICS CREATOR *OSAMU TEZUKA*, JAPANESE COMICS HAVE A LONG, RICH HISTORY OF ICONIC CHARACTERS.

ART © HAYASI AND OSIMA.

THE RESULTANT HYBRID STYLES HAD TREMENDOUS ICONIC ***RANGE***, FROM EXTREMELY CARTOONY CHARACTERS TO ***NEAR-PHOTOGRAPHIC BACKGROUNDS.***

MONA GOES TOKYO

BUT JAPANESE COMICS ARTISTS TOOK THE IDEA A STEP FURTHER

SOON, SOME OF THEM REALIZED THAT THE ***OBJECTIFYING POWER*** OF REALISTIC ARTS COULD BE PUT TO ***OTHER*** USES

FOR EXAMPLE, WHILE ***MOST*** CHARACTERS WERE DESIGNED ***SIMPLY***, TO ASSIST IN ***READER-IDENTIFICATION***

***OTHER*** CHARACTERS WERE DRAWN MORE ***REALISTICALLY*** IN ORDER TO ***OBJECTIFY*** THEM, EMPHASIZING THEIR ***"OTHERNESS"*** FROM THE READER

A PROP LIKE THIS ***SWORD*** MIGHT BE VERY ***CARTOONY*** IN ***ONE*** SEQUENCE--

--DUE TO THE ***"LIFE"*** IT POSSESSES AS AN EXTENSION OF MY CARTOON IDENTITY//

ART © HAYASI AND OSMA

BUT SUPPOSE I NOTICE SOME ***MYSTERIOUS WRITING*** CARVED ON THE SWORD'S ***HILT.***

IN JAPANESE COMICS, THE SWORD MIGHT ***NOW*** BECOME VERY ***REALISTIC***, NOT ONLY TO SHOW US THE DETAILS, BUT TO MAKE US AWARE OF THE SWORD AS AN ***OBJECT***, SOMETHING WITH ***WEIGHT, TEXTURE*** AND ***PHYSICAL COMPLEXITY.***

IN THIS AND IN ***OTHER WAYS***, COMICS IN JAPAN HAVE EVOLVED VERY ***DIFFERENTLY*** FROM THOSE IN THE WEST.

WE'LL RETURN TO THESE DIFFERENCES SEVERAL TIMES DURING THIS BOOK.

SEE PAGE 216 FOR COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

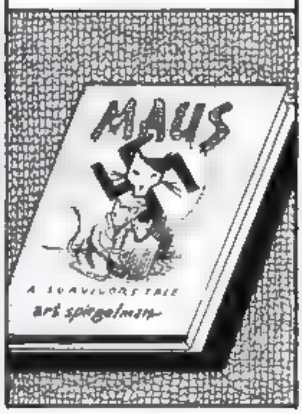
I *LIKE* THE MASKING EFFECT, PERSONALLY, BUT IT'S JUST ONE OF *MANY* POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO COMICS ART

MANY OF MY *FAVORITE ARTISTS* USE IT VERY *RARELY*

STILL, I HOPE THE JAPANESE PERSPECTIVE ON CARTOONING HELPS DEMONSTRATE THAT ONE'S CHOICE OF STYLES CAN HAVE CONSEQUENCES FAR BEYOND THE MERE *"LOOK"* OF A STORY

MAUS © AND T.M. ART SPIEGELMAN

AS I WRITE THIS, IN 1992, AMERICAN AUDIENCES ARE JUST BEGINNING TO REALIZE THAT A SIMPLE *STYLE* DOESN'T NECESSITATE SIMPLE *STORY.*

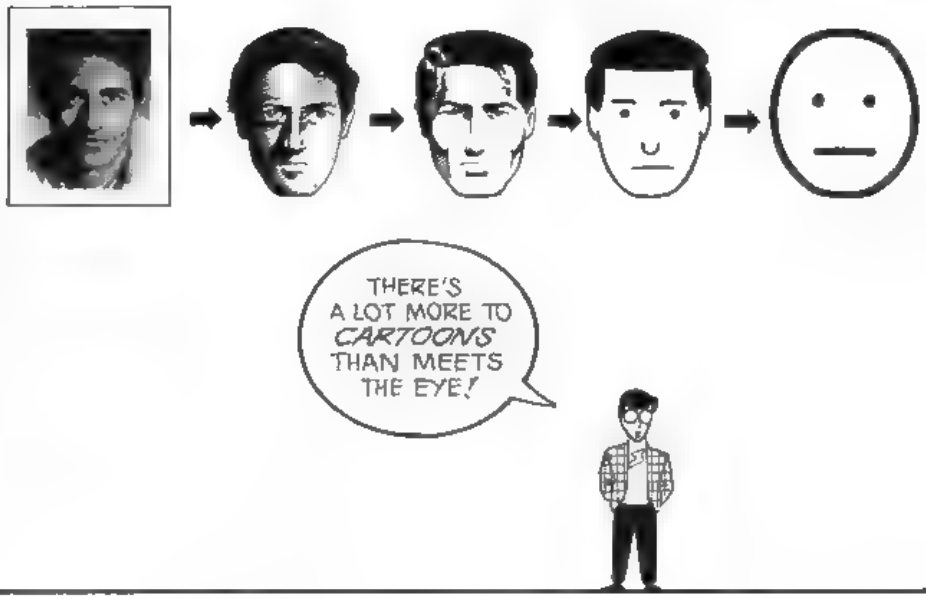


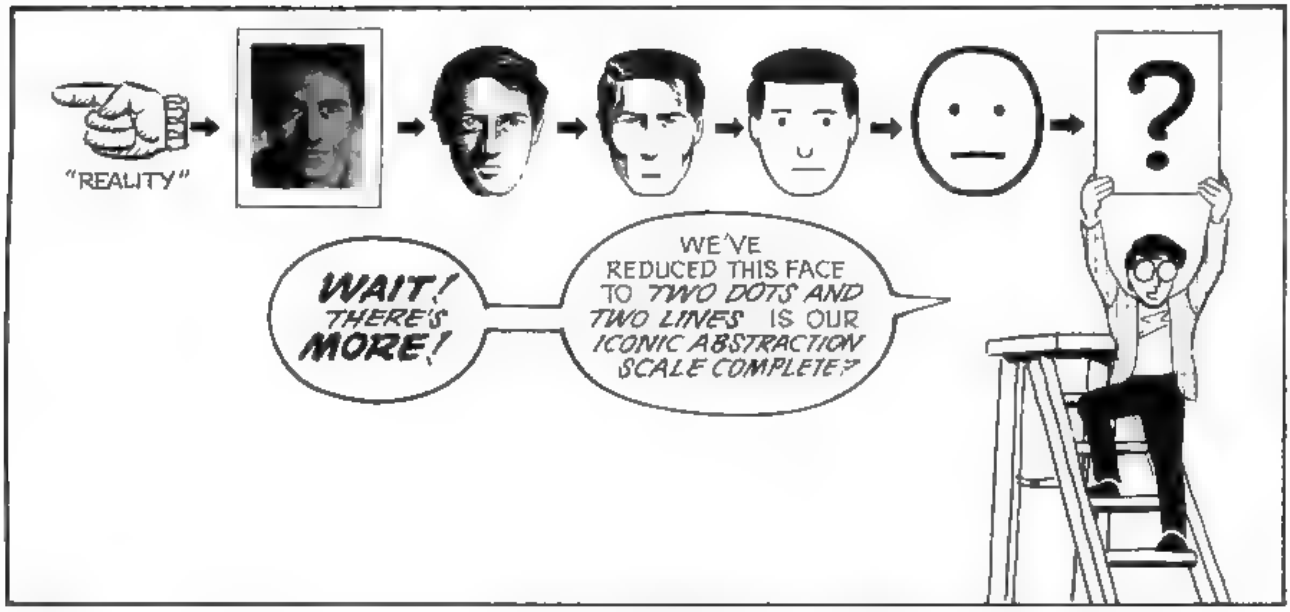

THE PLATONIC IDEAL OF THE CARTOON MAY SEEM TO OMIT MUCH OF THE *AMBIGUITY* AND *COMPLEX CHARACTERIZATION* WHICH ARE THE HALLMARKS OF *MODERN LITERATURE,* LEAVING THEM SUITABLE ONLY FOR *CHILDREN*

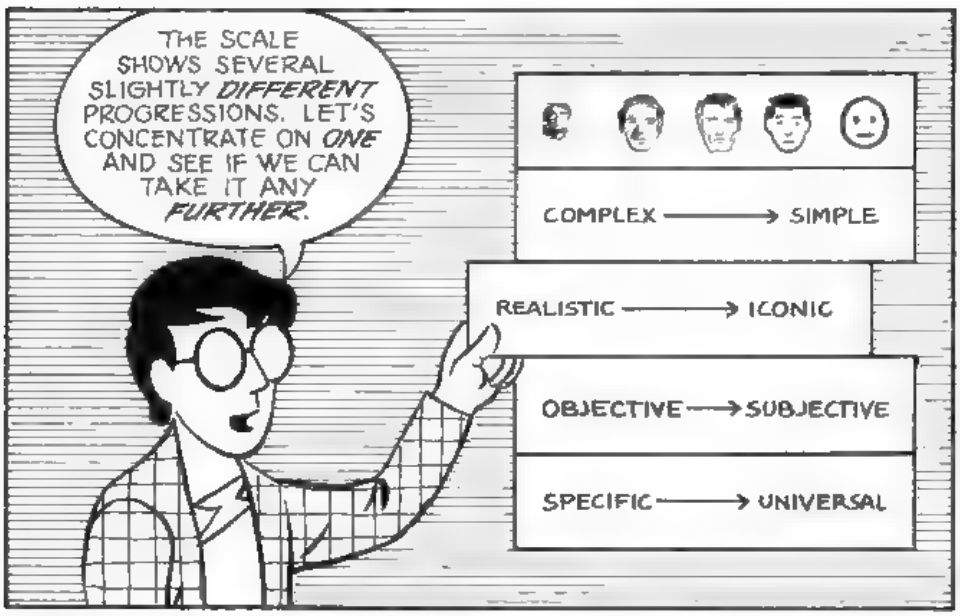
BUT SIMPLE ELEMENTS CAN COMBINE IN COMPLEX WAYS, AS ATOMS BECOME MOLECULES AND MOLECULES BECOME L FE

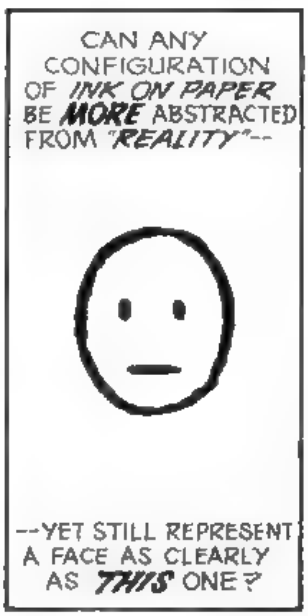
AND *LIKE* THE ATOM, GREAT POWER IS LOCKED IN THESE FEW SIMPLE LINES

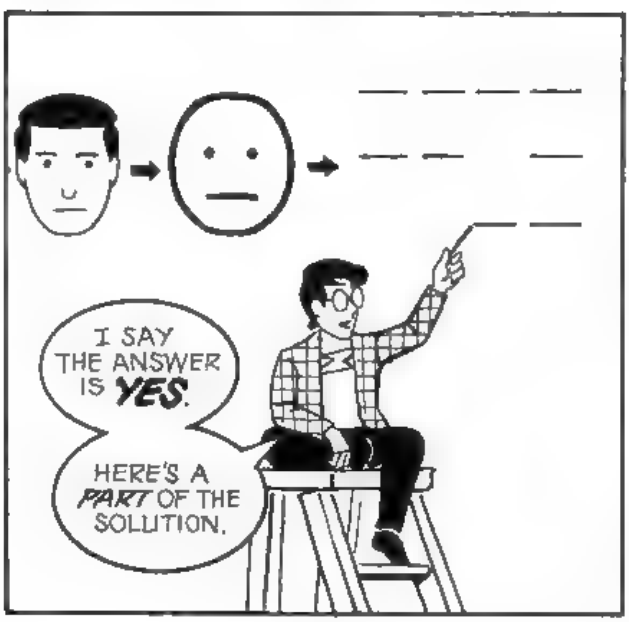
RELEASEABLE ONLY BY THE READER'S MIND.

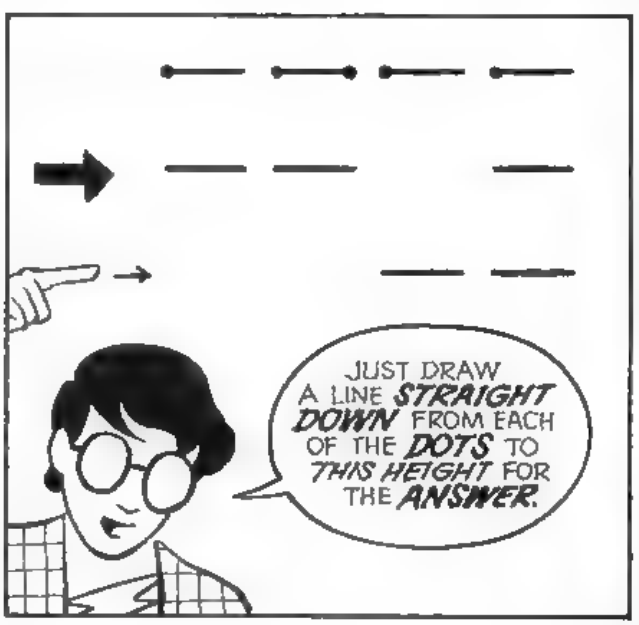



"REALITY"
?
WAIT! THERE'S MORE!
WE'VE REDUCED THIS FACE TO TWO DOTS AND TWO LINES IS OUR ICONIC ABSTRACTION SCALE COMPLETE?


THE SCALE SHOWS SEVERAL SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT PROGRESSIONS. LET'S CONCENTRATE ON ONE AND SEE IF WE CAN TAKE IT ANY FURTHER.
COMPLEX → SIMPLE
REALISTIC → ICONIC
OBJECTIVE → SUBJECTIVE
SPECIFIC → UNIVERSAL


CAN ANY CONFIGURATION OF INK ON PAPER BE MORE ABSTRACTED FROM "REALITY"--
--YET STILL REPRESENT A FACE AS CLEARLY AS THIS ONE?


I SAY THE ANSWER IS YES.
HERE'S A PART OF THE SOLUTION.


JUST DRAW A LINE STRAIGHT DOWN FROM EACH OF THE DOTS TO THIS HEIGHT FOR THE ANSWER.

MEANING RETAINED.
RESEMBLANCE GONE.
WORDS--
--ARE THE ULTIMATE ABSTRACTION.
MOST AMERICAN COMICS, NOTABLY COMIC BOOKS, HAVE LONG EMPHASIZED THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WORDS AND PICTURES
WRITING AND DRAWING ARE SEEN AS SEPARATE DISCIPLINES, WRITERS AND ARTISTS AS SEPARATE BREEDS--
--AND "GOOD" COMICS AS THOSE IN WHICH THE COMBINATION OF THESE VERY DIFFERENT FORMS OF EXPRESSION IS THOUGHT TO BE HARMONIOUS
BUT JUST HOW "DIFFERENT" ARE THEY?
WORDS, PICTURES AND OTHER ICONS ARE THE VOCABULARY OF THE LANGUAGE CALLED COMICS.
A SINGLE UNIFIED LANGUAGE DESERVES A SINGLE, UNIFIED VOCABULARY.
WITHOUT IT, COMICS WILL CONTINUE TO LIMP ALONG AS THE "BASTARD CHILD" OF WORDS AND PICTURES.
SEVERAL FACTORS HAVE CONSPIRED AGAINST COMICS RECEIVING THE UNIFIED IDENTITY IT NEEDS.
AND AMONG THEM LIE SOME OF OUR VERY BEST INSTINCTS.

BOTH ARTIST AND WRITER BEGIN, HANDS JOINED ACROSS THE GAP, WITH A COMMON PURPOSE: TO MAKE COMICS OF "*QUALITY*"

ARTIE

RITA

FACE

THE ARTIST KNOWS THAT THIS MEANS MORE THAN JUST *STICK-FIGURES* AND *CRUDE CARTOONS*. HE SETS OFF IN SEARCH OF A *HIGHER* ART.

THE WRITER KNOWS THAT THIS MEANS MORE THAN JUST *OOF! POW! BLAM!* AND *ONE-A-DAY GAGS* SHE SETS OFF IN SEARCH OF SOMETHING *DEEPER*.

IN MUSEUMS AND IN LIBRARIES, THE ARTIST FINDS WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR. HE STUDIES THE TECHNIQUES OF THE *GREAT MASTERS* OF *WESTERN ART*. HE PRACTICES *NIGHT AND DAY*

SHE *TOO* FINDS WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR, IN THE GREAT MASTERS OF *WESTERN LITERATURE*. SHE READS AND WRITES *CONSTANTLY*. SHE SEARCHES FOR A VOICE *UNIQUELY HERS*

FINALLY, THEY'RE READY. BOTH HAVE *MASTERED THEIR ARTS*. HIS BRUSHSTROKE IS NEARLY *INVISIBLE* IN ITS SUBTLETY, THE FIGURES PURE *MICHAELANGELO* HER DESCRIPTIONS ARE *DAZZLING* THE WORDS FLOW TOGETHER LIKE A *SHAKESPEAREAN SONNET*.

THEY'RE READY TO *JOIN HANDS* ONCE MORE AND CREATE A *COMICS MASTERPIECE*

?

?

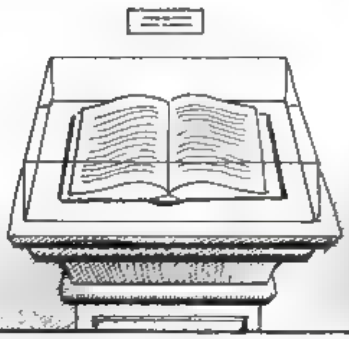
FACE

TWO EYES, ONE NOSE, ONE MOUTH

*Thy youth's ordinary, so gaz'd on now...*

PICTURES ARE ***RECEIVED*** INFORMATION. WE NEED NO FORMAL EDUCATION TO *"GET THE MESSAGE"* THE MESSAGE IS *INSTANTANEOUS.*

WRITING IS ***PERCEIVED*** INFORMATION. IT TAKES TIME AND SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE TO DECODE THE ABSTRACT SYMBOLS OF LANGUAGE



FACE → TWO EYES, ONE NOSE, ONE MOUTH. → *Thy youth's proud livery, so gaz'd on now.*

RECEIVED . . . . . PERCEIVED

WHEN PICTURES ARE MORE ABSTRACTED FROM 'REALITY,' THEY REQUIRE GREATER LEVELS OF *PERCEPTION,* ***MORE LIKE WORDS.***

WHEN WORDS ARE BOLDER, MORE DIRECT, THEY REQUIRE *LOWER* LEVELS OF PERCEPTION AND ARE RECEIVED *FASTER,* ***MORE LIKE PICTURES.***

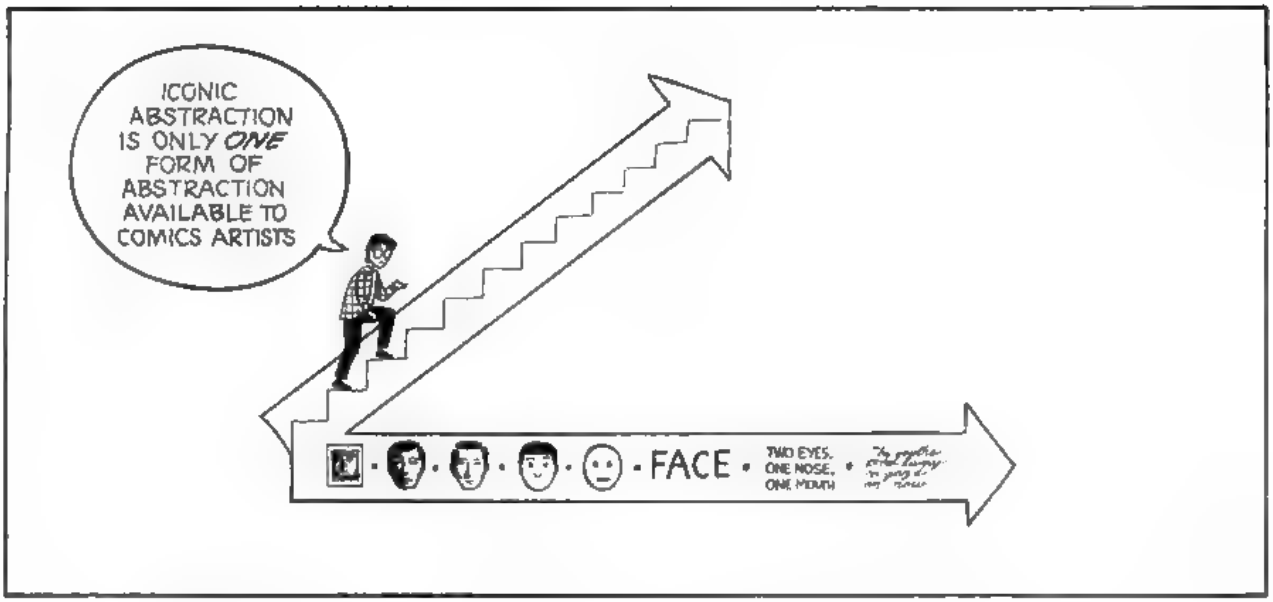
OUR NEED FOR A UNIFIED ***LANGUAGE*** OF COMICS SENDS US TOWARD THE CENTER WHERE WORDS AND PICTURES ARE LIKE TWO SIDES OF *ONE COIN!*

BUT OUR NEED FOR ***SOPHISTICATION*** IN COMICS SEEMS TO LEAD US *OUTWARD,* WHERE WORDS AND PICTURES ARE MOST *SEPARATE.*

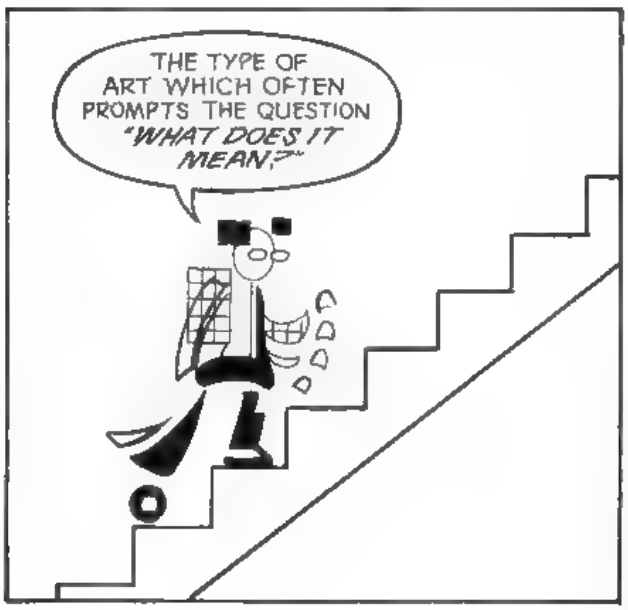
BOTH ARE ***WORTHY ASPIRATIONS.*** BOTH STEM FROM A LOVE OF COMICS AND A DEVOTION TO ITS FUTURE

CAN THEY BE ***RECONCILED?***

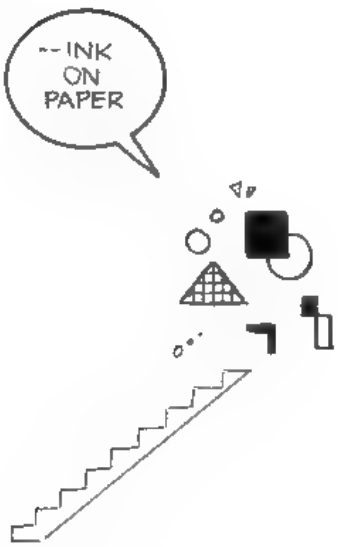
I SAY THE ANSWER IS ***YES,*** BUT SINCE THE REASONS BELONG IN A *DIFFERENT CHAPTER,* WE'LL HAVE TO COME BACK TO THIS *LATER.*

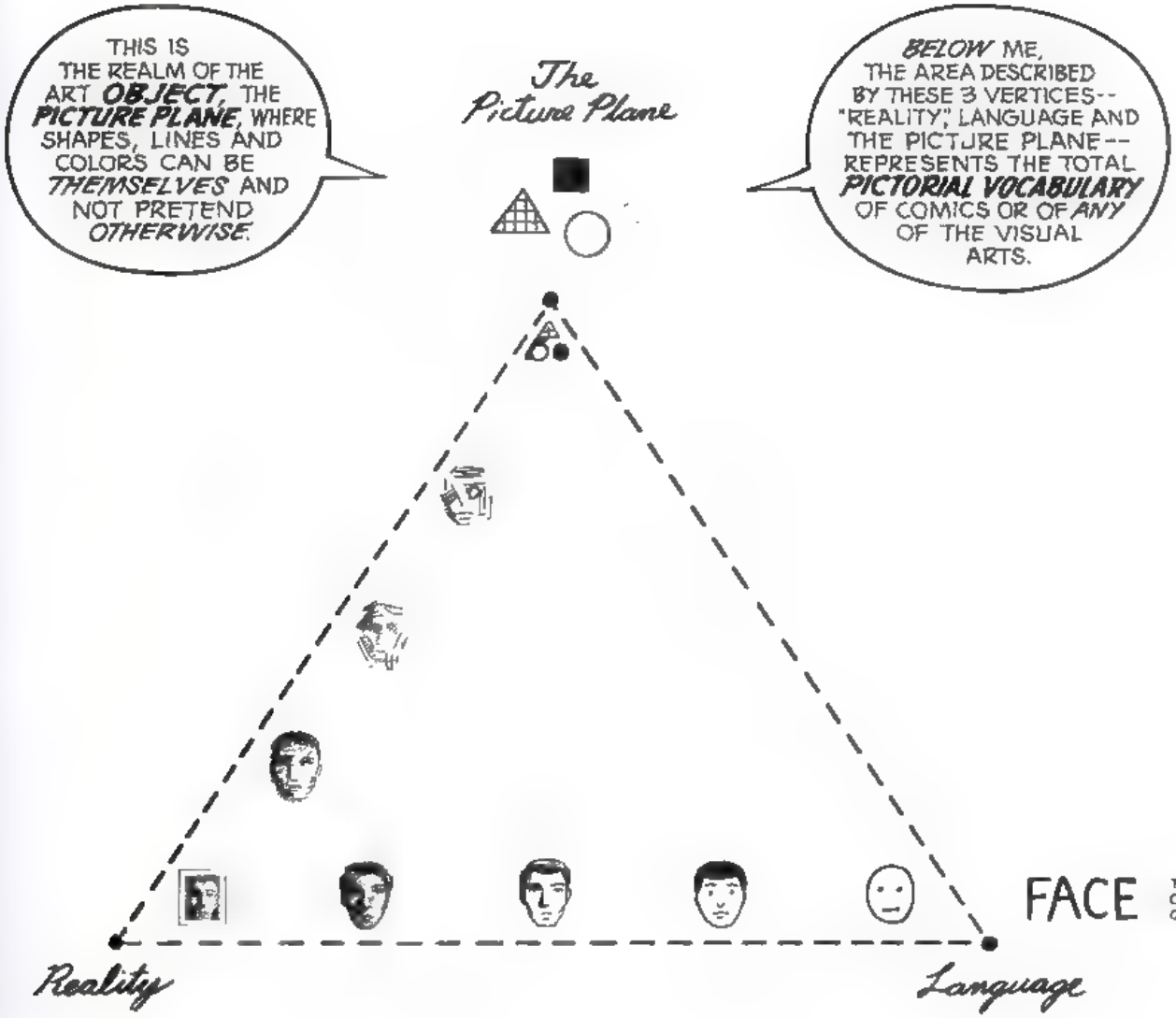

ICONIC ABSTRACTION IS ONLY *ONE* FORM OF ABSTRACTION AVAILABLE TO COMICS ARTISTS
FACE
TWO EYES, ONE NOSE, ONE MOUTH

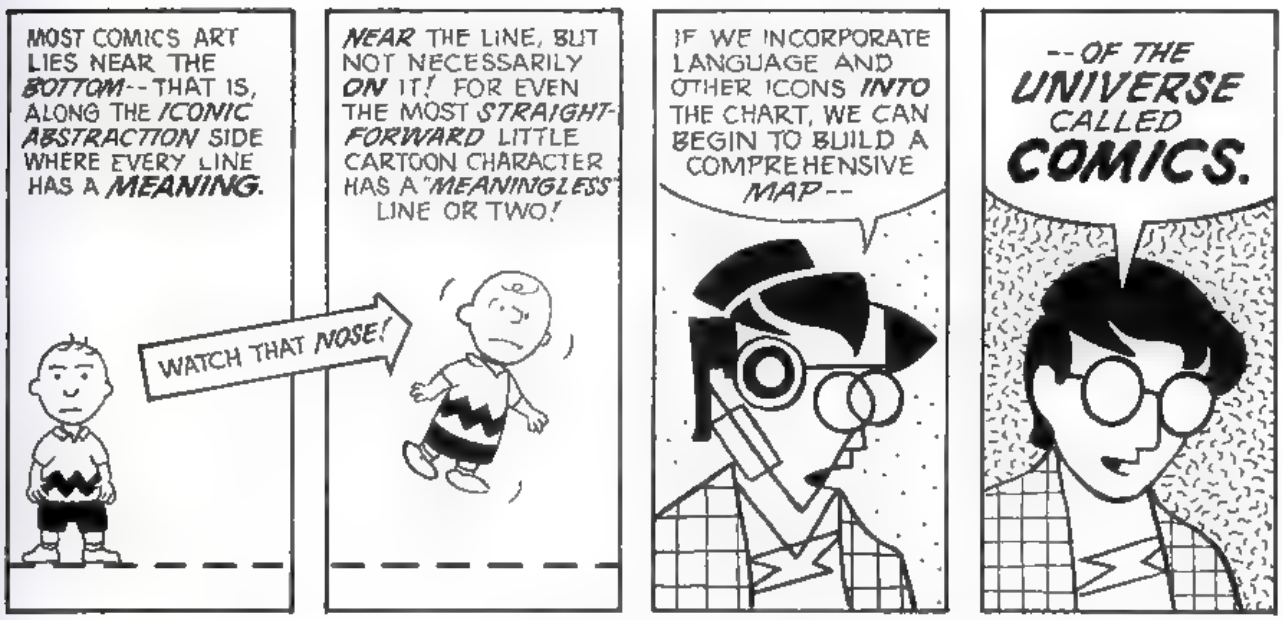
USUALLY THE WORD "ABSTRACTION" REFERS TO THE *NON-ICONIC* VARIETY, WHERE NO ATTEMPT IS MADE TO CLING TO RESEMBLANCE *OR* MEANING


THE TYPE OF ART WHICH OFTEN PROMPTS THE QUESTION *"WHAT DOES IT MEAN?"*

EARNING THE REPLY "IT *'MEANS'* WHAT IT *IS!*"
IN THIS CASE--


--INK ON PAPER


THIS IS THE REALM OF THE ART *OBJECT*, THE *PICTURE PLANE*, WHERE SHAPES, LINES AND COLORS CAN BE *THEMSELVES* AND NOT PRETEND *OTHERWISE*.
*The Picture Plane*
*BELOW* ME, THE AREA DESCRIBED BY THESE 3 VERTICES-- "REALITY," LANGUAGE AND THE PICTURE PLANE-- REPRESENTS THE TOTAL *PICTORIAL VOCABULARY* OF COMICS OR OF *ANY* OF THE VISUAL ARTS.
FACE
TWO EYES, ONE NOSE, ONE MOUTH
*Reality*
*Language*


MOST COMICS ART LIES NEAR THE *BOTTOM*-- THAT IS, ALONG THE *ICONIC ABSTRACTION* SIDE WHERE EVERY LINE HAS A *MEANING*.
*NEAR* THE LINE, BUT NOT NECESSARILY *ON* IT! FOR EVEN THE MOST *STRAIGHT-FORWARD* LITTLE CARTOON CHARACTER HAS A "*MEANINGLESS*" LINE OR TWO!
WATCH THAT *NOSE*!
IF WE INCORPORATE LANGUAGE AND OTHER ICONS *INTO* THE CHART, WE CAN BEGIN TO BUILD A COMPREHENSIVE *MAP*--
--*OF THE UNIVERSE CALLED* **COMICS.**

**1. MARY FLEENER** at her most abstract. **2. MARISCAL**'s Piker. **3. DAVE McKEAN** employing one of the many styles found in his series CAGES. **4. MARC HEMPEL**'s GREGORY. **5. MARK BEYER. 6. LARRY MARDER**'s Beanish from TALES OF THE BEANWORLD "Reassembling" nothing ever seen (hence all the way to the right). Marder's beans walk the line from design to meaning. **7 SAUL STEINBERG. 8. PENNY MORAN VAN-HORN** from THE LIBRARIAN. **9. LORENZO MATTOTI** in FIRES (© Editions Albin Michel S.A.) combines deeply impressionistic lighting with iconic forms and strong, design-oriented compositions. In other words, he's a hard one to place. **10. ALINE KOMINSKY-CRUMB. 11. PETER BAGGE**'s Chuckle-Boy from NEAT STUFF. Compare to 39. **12. KRISTINE KRYTTRE. 13. REA IRVIN.** THE SMYTHES © Field Newspaper Syndicate. **14. STEVE WILLIS** s Morty. **15. PHIL YEH**'s FRANK THE UNICORN. **16. JERRY MORIARTY**'s "Jack Survives" Based closely on real world light and shadow, but decomposed into rough shapes. Similar ideas are found in no.s 8,18,19,20 and 34. **17. JEFF WONG**'s art for Scott Russo's JIZZ. **18. ROLF STARK**'s expressionistic RAIN. **19. SPAIN**'s TRASHMAN. **20. FRANK MILLER**'s THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS, Batman © D.C. Comics. Batman created by Bob Kane. **21. WILLIAM MESSNER-LOEBS**'s Wolverine MacAllister from JOURNEY. **22. DON SIMPSON**'s MEGATON MAN. Beginning from a realistic anatomical base, Simpson distorts and exaggerates M.M.'s features to the brink of abstraction. **23 MICHAEL CHERKAS** from SILENT INVASION. © Cherkas and Hancock. **24. RICK GEARY. 25. PETER KUPER. 26. GARRY TRUDEAU**'s DOONESBURY. **27. LYNDA BARRY. 28. SAMPEI SHIRATO. 29. CHARLES BURNS**'s BIG BABY. **29 1/2.** (Whoops) **CLIFF STERRETT.** The character pictured here (from POLLY AND HER PALS) might belong a bit lower, but Sterrett's art, like Fleener's often heads upward toward the wisely abstract. P.A.N.P. s © Newspaper Features Syndicate, Inc. **30. SERGIO ARAGONES**'s GROO THE WANDERER. Simple, straightforward, but with a strong gestural quality that always reminds us of the hand that holds the pen (also true of 14,26,31,41). **31. ROBERTA GREGORY**'s Bitchy Bitch from NAUGHTY BITS. **32. DAVID MAZZUCCHELLI** from BATMAN YEAR ONE. Commissioner Gordon © D.C. Comics. **33. JOSE MUNOZ** from "Mister Conrad, Mister Wilcox" © Munoz and Sampayo. **34. CAROL SWAIN. 35. CHESTER GOULD**'s DICK TRACY © Chicago Tribune-New York Syndicate, Inc. **36. JACK KIRBY**'s Darkseid © D.C. Comics. **37 BOB BURDEN. 38 DANIEL TORRES**'s Rocco Vargas from TRITON. **39. PETER BAGGE**'s Buddy Bradley from HATE. Compare to 11 and 40. **SETH. 41. MARK MARTIN. 42 JULIE DOUCET. 43. EDWARD GOREY. 44 CRAIG RUSSELL**'s Mowgli from Kipling's THE JUNGLE BOOKS. Russell's characters are as finely observed and realistically based as Ha. Foster's or Dave Stevens' but with an unparalleled sense of design that draws them toward the upper vertex. Lately, Russell has been moving a bit higher and toward the right in some cases. **45. GOSEKI KOJIMA** from KOZURE OKAMI ("Wolf and Cub") © Koike and Kojima. **46. EDDIE CAMPBELL**'s ALEC. Realistic in tone but also gestural and spontaneous. The process of drawing isn't hidden from view. **47 ALEX TOTH.** Zorro © ZorroProductions, Inc. Art © Walt Disney Productions (Zorro created by Johnston McCulley). **48 HUGO PRATT**'s CORTO MALTESE © Casterman, Paris-Tournai. **49. WILL EISNER** from TO THE HEART OF THE STORM. **50. DORI SEDA. 51. R. CRUMB** swings between realistic and cartoony characters, usually staying about this high but occasionally venturing upward. **52 STEVE DITKO. 53. NORMAN DOG. 54. VALENTINO**'s NORMALMAN sits a bit to the right and up from his current SHADOWHAWK (whose iconic mask made him a bit harder to place). **55. ROZ CHAST. 56. JOOST SWARTE**'s Anton Mekassa. **57. ELZIE SEGAR**'s POPEYE © King features Syndicate, Inc. **58. GEORGE HERRIMAN**'s "Offsea Pupp" from KRAZY KAT. © International feature Service, Inc. **59. JIM WOODRING**'s FRANK. **60 NEAL ADAMS** from X-MEN © Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. (X-Men created by Lee and Kirby). **61. GIL KANE** from ACTION COMICS © D.C. Comics, Inc. **62 MILTON CANIFF**'s STEVE CANYON. **63. JIM LEE.** Nick Fury appearing in X-MEN © Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. **64. JOHN BYRNE.** Superman © D.C. Comics, Inc. (Superman created by Jerry Siegel and Joe Schuster). **65 JACQUES TARDI** from LE DEMON DES GLACES © Dargaud Editeur. **66. JEAN-CLAUDE MEZIERES.** Laureline from the VALERIAN series. © Dargaud Editeur. **67. BILL GRIFFITH**'s ZIPPY THE PINHEAD. **68. JOE MATT. 69. KYLE BAKER** from WHY I HATE SATURN. **70. TRINA ROBBINS**'s MISTY. © Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. **71 RIYOKO IKEDA**'s Oscar from THE ROSE OF VERSAILLES. **72. GEORGE McMANUS. BRINGING UP FATHER** © Intecartoons, Feature Service, Inc. **73 CHARLES SCHULZ**'s Charlie Brown from PEANUTS © United Features Syndicate, Inc. **74. ART SPIEGELMAN** from MAUS. **75. MATT FEAZELL**'s CYNICALMAN. **76.** The company Logo. The picture as symbol. **77.** We Logo. The word as object. **78.** Sound Effect. The word as sound. **79. TOM KING**'s SNOOKUMS, THAT LOVABLE TRANSVESTITE a photo-comic. **80. DREW FRIEDMAN. 81 DAVE STEVENS. 82. HAL FOSTER** TARZAN created by Edgar Rice Burroughs. **83. ALEX RAYMOND.** Flash Gordon © King Features Syndicate, Inc. **84. MILO MANARA. 85. JOHN BUSCEMA** The Vision © Marvel Entertainment Group. **86. CAROL LAY**'s Irene Van de Kamp from GOOD GIRLS. A bizarre character, but drawn in a very straightforward style. **87. GILBERT HERNANDEZ. 88. JAIME HERNANDEZ 89. COLIN UPTON. 90. KURT SCHAFFENBERGER.** Superboy © D.C. Comics. **91. JACK COLE**'s PLASTIC MAN, © D.C. Comics. **92 REED WALLER**'s OMAHA THE CAT DANCER. © Waller and Worley. **93. WENDY PINI**'s Skywise from ELFQUEST. © WaRP Graphics. **94. DAN DE CARLO.** Veronica © Archie Comics. **95. HAROLD GRAY**'s LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE. © Chicago Tribune- New York News Syndicate. **96. HERGE**'s TINTIN © Editions Casterman. **97. FLOYD GOTTFREDSON** Mickey Mouse © Walt Disney Productions. **98. JEFF SMITH**'s BONE. **99.** Smile Damn! **100. COLLEEN DORAN**'s A DISTANT SOIL. **101. ROY CRANE**'s CAPTAIN EASY © NEA Service, Inc. **102. DAN CLOWES. 103. WAYNO. 104. V.T. HAMLIN**'s ALLEY OOP © NEA Service, Inc. **105. CHESTER BROWN. 106 STAN SAKAI**'s USAGI YOJIMBO. **107. DAVE SIM**'s CEREBUS THE AARDVARK. **108 WALT KELLY**'s POGO © Selby Kelly. **109. RUDOLPH DIRKS**'s HANS AND FRITZ © King Features Syndicate, Inc. **110. H.C "BUD" FISHER**'s Jeff from MUTT AND JEFF © McNaught Syndicate, Inc. **111 MORT WALKER**'s HI AND LOIS © King Features Syndicate, Inc. **112. OSAMU TEZUKA**'s ASTROBOY. **113. CARL BARKS.** Scrooge McDuck © Walt Disney Productions. **114. CROCKETT JOHNSON**'s Mister O'Malley from BARNABY © Field Newspaper Syndicate, Inc. **115. PAT SULLIVAN**'s FELIX THE CAT © Newspaper Feature Service. **116. UDERZO.** ASTERIX by Goscinny and Uderzo © Dargaud Editeur

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Keep in mind that these are my copies of the original drawings

"Reality" THE REPRESENTATIONAL FACE Meaning

PLEASE NOTE: ARTISTS IN THIS CHART ARE NOT NECESSARILY CHOSEN FOR ARTISTIC MERIT SOME VERY IMPORTANT CREATORS ARE NOT INCLUDED.

The Picture Plane

TUNDRA COMICS & SPLASH!

AAAH! READ IT LATER

MOST OF THE PRECEDING EXAMPLES WERE PLACED ON OUR CHART BASED ON THE DRAWING STYLES USED ON *SPECIFIC CHARACTERS*.
EACH CREATOR EMPLOYS A *RANGE* OF STYLES, THOUGH, AND MANY OCCUPY *SEVERAL* PLACES ON THE CHART DURING A GIVEN PROJECT
SOME, LIKE MATT FEAZELL'S *CYNICALMAN*, KEEP TO ONE AREA CONSISTENTLY
THE AMAZING CYNICALMAN
JUST SAY NO
NO
MAYBE

THE COMBINATION OF *EXTREMELY ICONIC CHARACTERS* AND *ENVIRONMENTS*, MIXED WITH *SIMPLE, DIRECT LANGUAGE* AND A *SOUND EFFECT* OR TWO WOULD GIVE US A SHAPE SOMETHING LIKE *THIS*:
NO
BUT OTHERS *RANGE CONSIDERABLY* FROM ONE END OF THE CHART TO THE OTHER
WE'VE ALREADY DISCUSSED THE RANGE OF HERGÉ AND OTHERS WHO CONTRAST *ICONIC CHARACTERS* WITH *REALISTIC BACKGROUNDS*

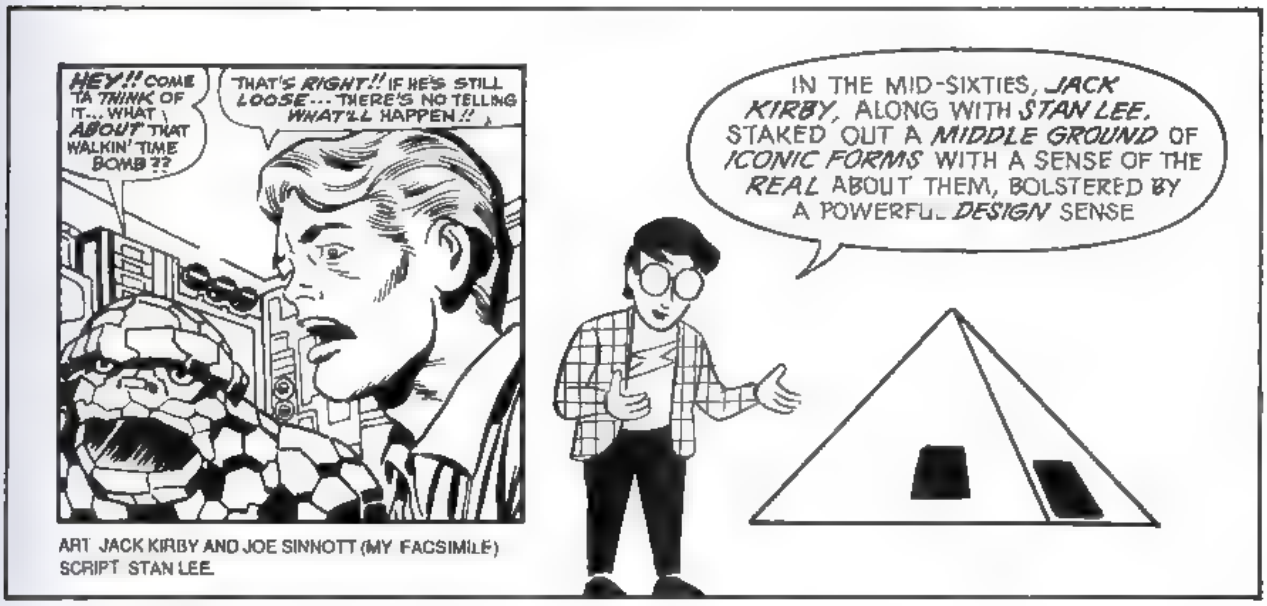
Sound on!
O.K...Let's roll!
Vision on!
HERGÉ STRETCHES NEARLY FROM *LEFT TO RIGHT*-- FROM *REALISM* TO *CARTOONING*-- BUT VENTURES VERY *LITTLE* INTO THE *UPPER* WORLD OF *NON-ICONIC* ABSTRACTION.

CYNICALMAN © MATT FEAZELL

ART © EDITIONS CASTERMAN

MARY FLEENER, ON THE OTHER HAND, VARIES ONLY SLIGHTLY IN HER LEVEL OF ICONIC CONTENT, WHILE THE LEVEL OF NON-ICONIC ABSTRACTION GOES NEARLY FROM TOP TO BOTTOM!

ART © MARY FLEENER.


HEY!! COME TA THINK OF IT... WHAT ABOUT THAT WALKIN' TIME BOMB??
THAT'S RIGHT!! IF HE'S STILL LOOSE... THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT'LL HAPPEN!!
IN THE MID-SIXTIES, JACK KIRBY, ALONG WITH STAN LEE, STAKED OUT A MIDDLE GROUND OF ICONIC FORMS WITH A SENSE OF THE REAL ABOUT THEM, BOLSTERED BY A POWERFUL DESIGN SENSE

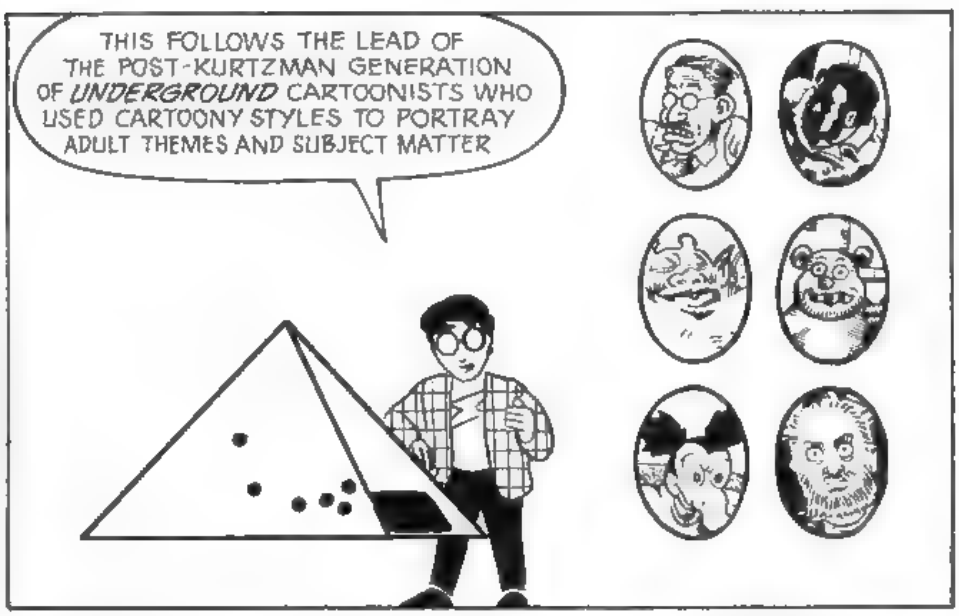
ART JACK KIRBY AND JOE SINNOTT (MY FACSIMILE)
SCRIPT STAN LEE.

TODAY, MANY AMERICAN MAINSTREAM COMICS STILL FOLLOW KIRBY'S LEAD FOR STORYTELLING, BUT THE DESIRE FOR MORE REALISTIC ART AND MORE ELABORATE SCRIPTS HAS PUSHED ART AND STORY FURTHER APART IN MANY CASES.
A FIGHT STARTED ON HIS DOORSTEP. HE PUT A STOP TO IT. FAR AS ANYONE KNOWS, ALL THE SURVIVORS ARE PRETTY MUCH OKAY.
WAY YOU TALK, NICHOLAS. FOLKS EXPECT HIM TO START NUKIN' MAMA RUSSIA ANY MOMENT

ART: JIM LEE AND SCOTT WILLIAMS (FACSIMILE)
SCRIPT CHRIS CLAREMONT

ART FROM COLOR PANELS TRACED FOR REPRODUCTION.
© MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC.

IN THE EIGHTIES AND NINETIES, MOST OF THE COUNTERCULTURE OF INDEPENDENT CREATORS, WORKING MOSTLY IN BLACK AND WHITE, STAYED TO THE *RIGHT* OF MAINSTREAM COMICS ART WHILE COVERING A BROAD RANGE OF WRITING STYLES


THIS FOLLOWS THE LEAD OF THE POST-KURTZMAN GENERATION OF *UNDERGROUND* CARTOONISTS WHO USED CARTOONY STYLES TO PORTRAY ADULT THEMES AND SUBJECT MATTER

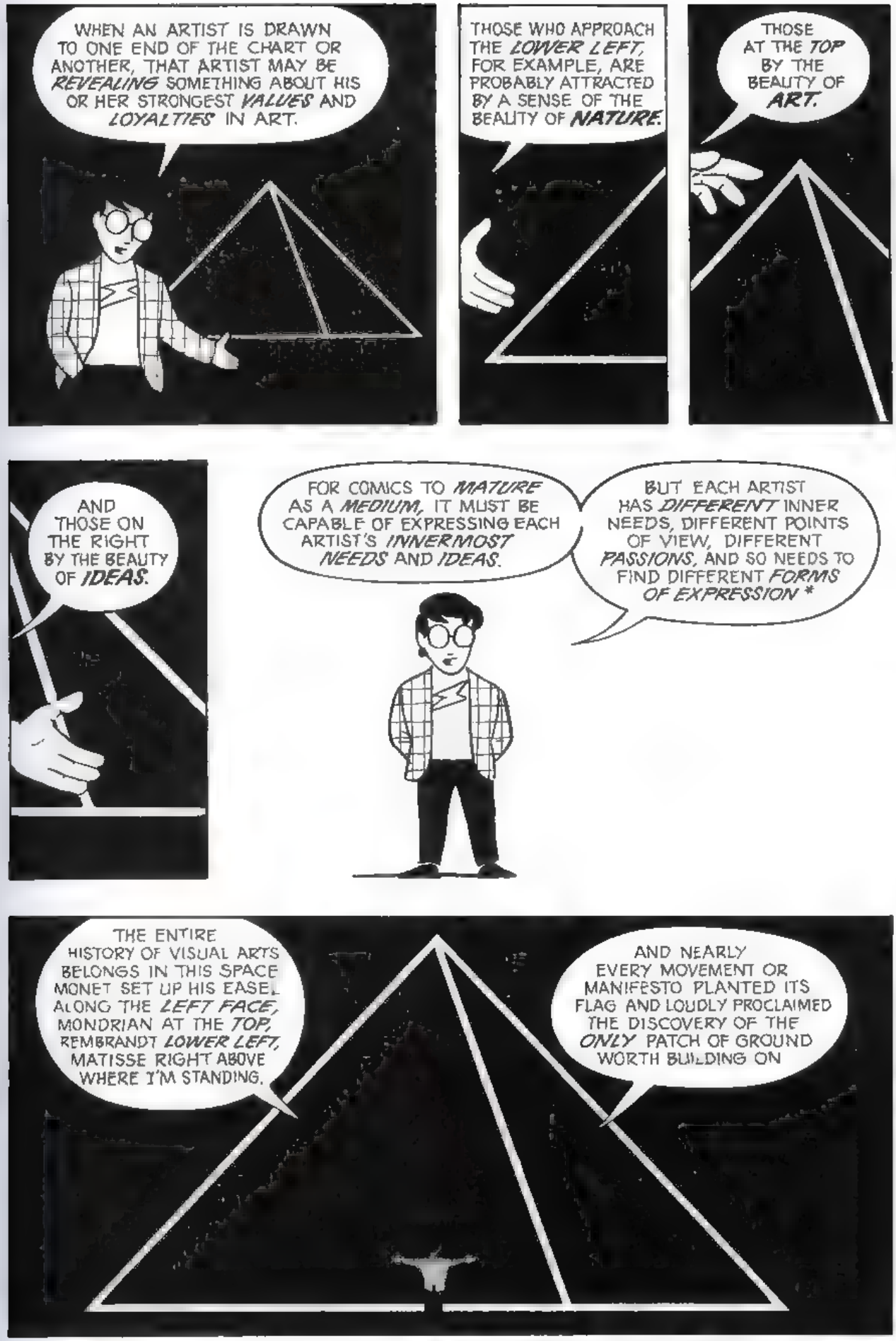
SOME ARTISTS, SUCH AS THE IRREPRESSIBLE *SERGIO ARAGONES*, STAKED THEIR CLAIM ON A PARTICULAR AREA *LONG AGO* AND HAVE BEEN QUITE HAPPY SINCE.

SEE PAGE 216 FOR COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

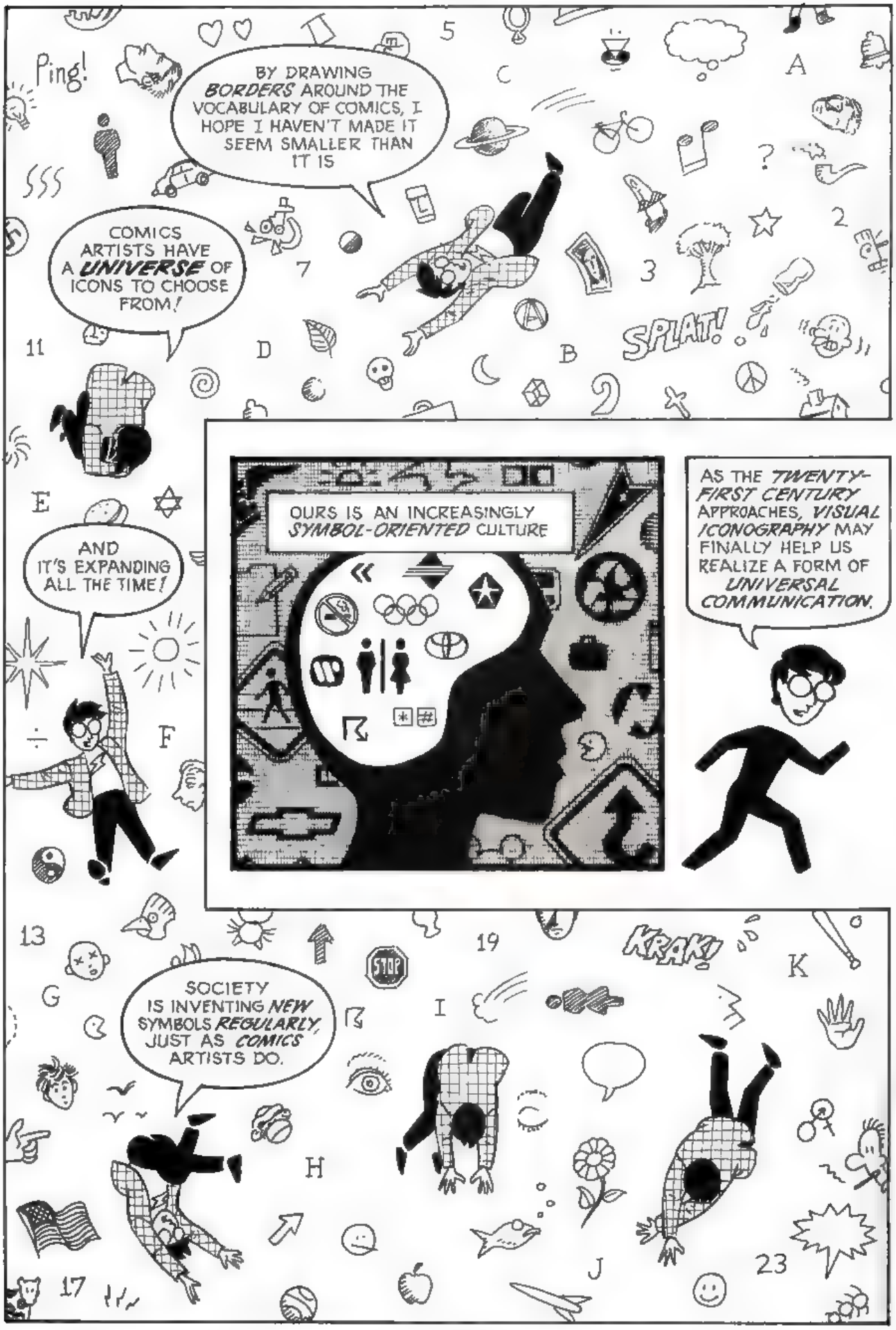
SERGIO AND GROO © SERGIO ARAGONES



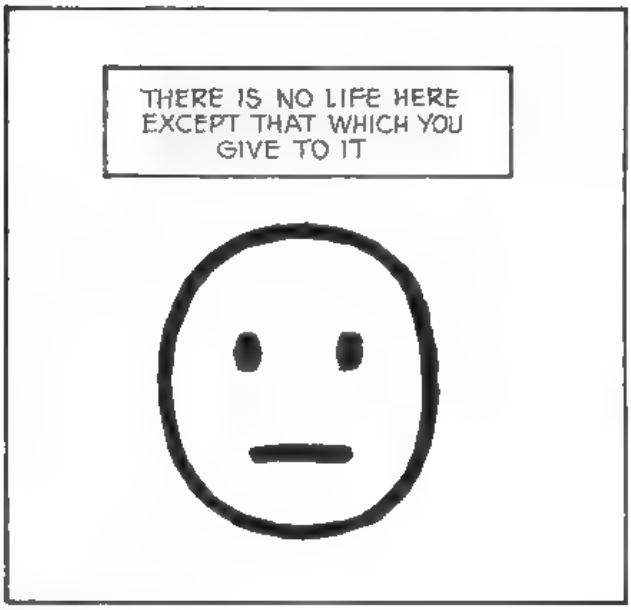
ART (LEFT) © DAVE McKEAN, (RIGHT) © D.C. COMICS.


WHEN AN ARTIST IS DRAWN TO ONE END OF THE CHART OR ANOTHER, THAT ARTIST MAY BE *REVEALING* SOMETHING ABOUT HIS OR HER STRONGEST *VALUES* AND *LOYALTIES* IN ART.
THOSE WHO APPROACH THE *LOWER LEFT*, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE PROBABLY ATTRACTED BY A SENSE OF THE BEAUTY OF *NATURE*.
THOSE AT THE *TOP* BY THE BEAUTY OF *ART*.
AND THOSE ON THE RIGHT BY THE BEAUTY OF *IDEAS*.
FOR COMICS TO *MATURE* AS A *MEDIUM*, IT MUST BE CAPABLE OF EXPRESSING EACH ARTIST'S *INNERMOST NEEDS* AND *IDEAS*.
BUT EACH ARTIST HAS *DIFFERENT* INNER NEEDS, DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW, DIFFERENT *PASSIONS*, AND SO NEEDS TO FIND DIFFERENT *FORMS OF EXPRESSION* *
THE ENTIRE HISTORY OF VISUAL ARTS BELONGS IN THIS SPACE MONET SET UP HIS EASEL ALONG THE *LEFT FACE*, MONDRIAN AT THE *TOP*, REMBRANDT *LOWER LEFT*, MATISSE RIGHT ABOVE WHERE I'M STANDING.
AND NEARLY EVERY MOVEMENT OR MANIFESTO PLANTED ITS FLAG AND LOUDLY PROCLAIMED THE DISCOVERY OF THE *ONLY* PATCH OF GROUND WORTH BUILDING ON

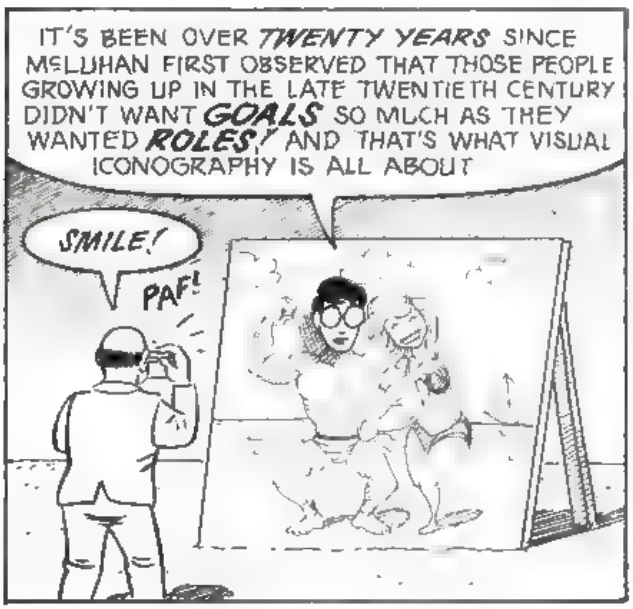
* CHECK OUT WASSILY KANDINSKY'S TERRIFIC 1912 ESSAY, "ON THE PROBLEM OF FORM."

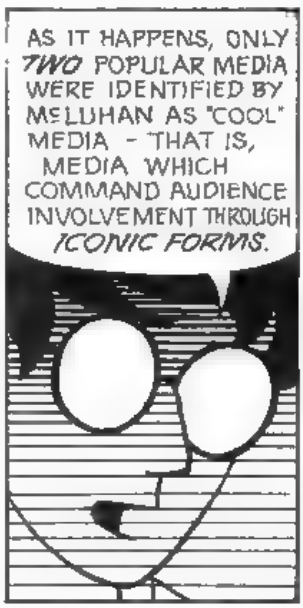

Ping!
BY DRAWING BORDERS AROUND THE VOCABULARY OF COMICS, I HOPE I HAVEN'T MADE IT SEEM SMALLER THAN IT IS
SPLAT!
COMICS ARTISTS HAVE A UNIVERSE OF ICONS TO CHOOSE FROM!
AND IT'S EXPANDING ALL THE TIME!
OURS IS AN INCREASINGLY SYMBOL-ORIENTED CULTURE
AS THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY APPROACHES, VISUAL ICONOGRAPHY MAY FINALLY HELP US REALIZE A FORM OF UNIVERSAL COMMUNICATION.
SOCIETY IS INVENTING NEW SYMBOLS REGULARLY, JUST AS COMICS ARTISTS DO.
KRAK!
STOP

ICONS DEMAND OUR PARTICIPATION TO MAKE THEM WORK.


THERE IS NO LIFE HERE EXCEPT THAT WHICH YOU GIVE TO IT

IT'S *YOUR* JOB TO CREATE AND *RECREATE* ME MOMENT BY MOMENT, NOT JUST THE CARTOONIST'S


IT'S BEEN OVER *TWENTY YEARS* SINCE McLUHAN FIRST OBSERVED THAT THOSE PEOPLE GROWING UP IN THE LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY DIDN'T WANT *GOALS* SO MUCH AS THEY WANTED *ROLES*, AND THAT'S WHAT VISUAL ICONOGRAPHY IS ALL ABOUT
SMILE!
PAF!


AS IT HAPPENS, ONLY *TWO* POPULAR MEDIA WERE IDENTIFIED BY McLUHAN AS "COOL" MEDIA - THAT IS, MEDIA WHICH COMMAND AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT THROUGH *ICONIC FORMS.*

ONE OF THEM, *TELEVISION,* HAS REACHED INTO THE LIVES OF EVERY HUMAN BEING ON EARTH--

--AND FOR BETTER OR WORSE, ALTERED THE COURSE OF HUMAN AFFAIRS FROM HERE 'TIL *DOOMSDAY*

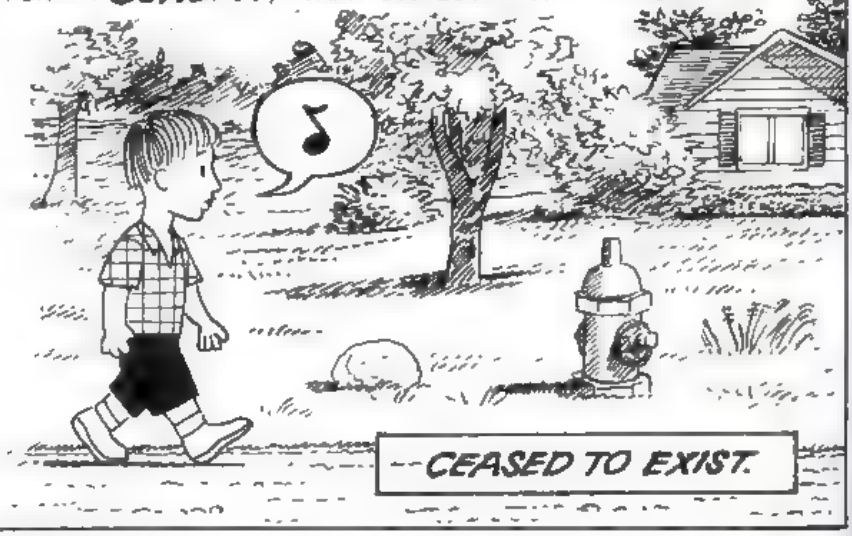
THE FATE OF THE *OTHER* ONE, *COMICS* -
SEQUENTIAL ART

-- IS ANYONE'S GUESS

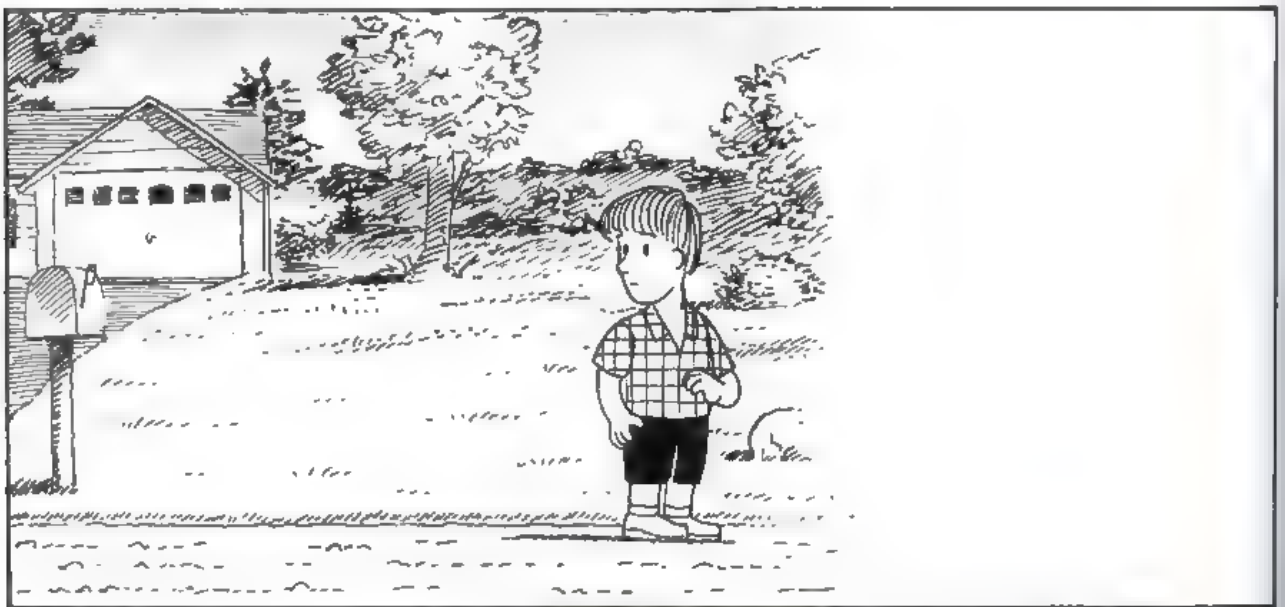
# CHAPTER THREE

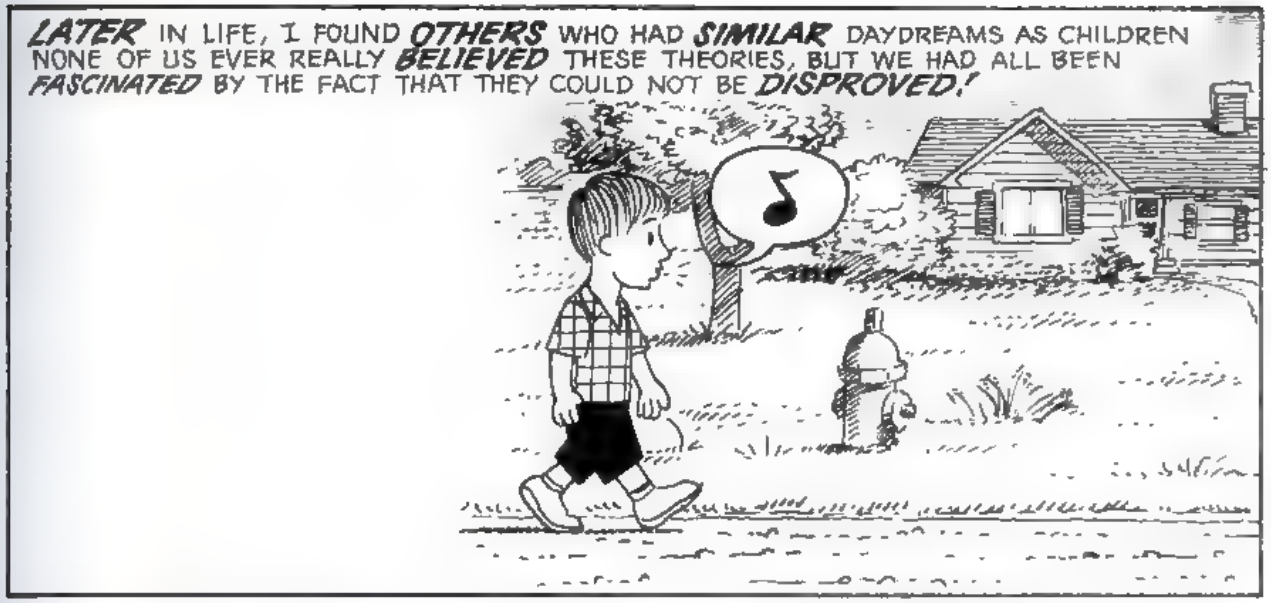
BLOOD IN THE GUTTER.

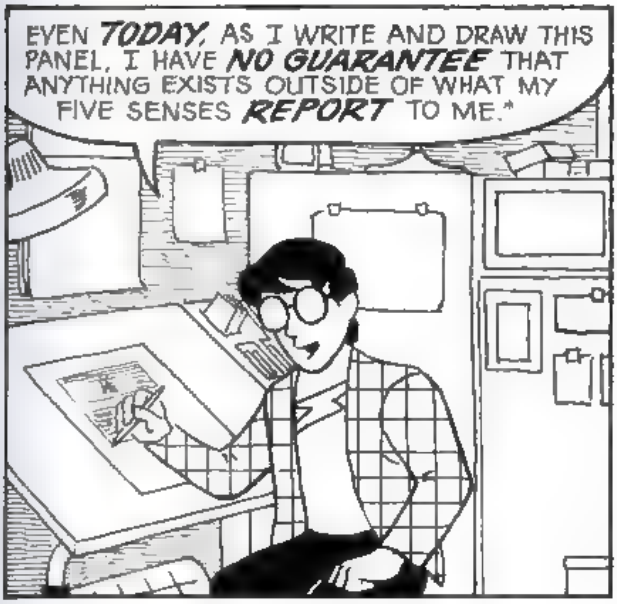
WHEN I WAS VERY YOUNG, I HAD A RECURRENT *DAYDREAM* THAT THE ***WHOLE WORLD*** WAS JUST A ***SHOW*** PUT ON FOR MY ***BENEFIT***, THAT UNLESS I WAS PRESENT TO ***SEE*** THINGS, THEY JUST--



*--CEASED TO EXIST.*




LATER IN LIFE, I FOUND OTHERS WHO HAD SIMILAR DAYDREAMS AS CHILDREN
NONE OF US EVER REALLY BELIEVED THESE THEORIES, BUT WE HAD ALL BEEN
FASCINATED BY THE FACT THAT THEY COULD NOT BE DISPROVED!


EVEN TODAY, AS I WRITE AND DRAW THIS PANEL, I HAVE NO GUARANTEE THAT ANYTHING EXISTS OUTSIDE OF WHAT MY FIVE SENSES REPORT TO ME.*

* NOT TO SAY OUR SENSES ARE ANY KIND OF GUARANTEE!

ALL OF US PERCEIVE THE WORLD AS A *WHOLE* THROUGH THE EXPERIENCE OF OUR *SENSES*.

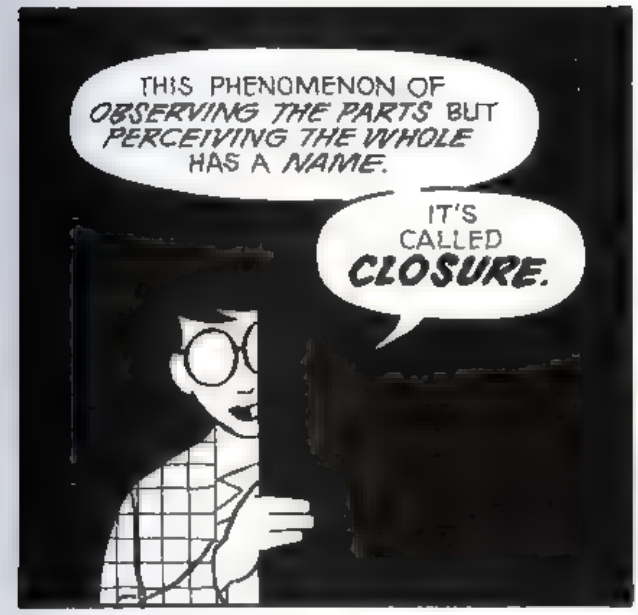
YET OUR SENSES CAN ONLY REVEAL A WORLD THAT IS *FRAGMENTED* AND *INCOMPLETE*.

EVEN THE MOST *WIDELY TRAVELLED* MIND CAN ONLY SEE SO MUCH OF THE WORLD IN THE COURSE OF A LIFE

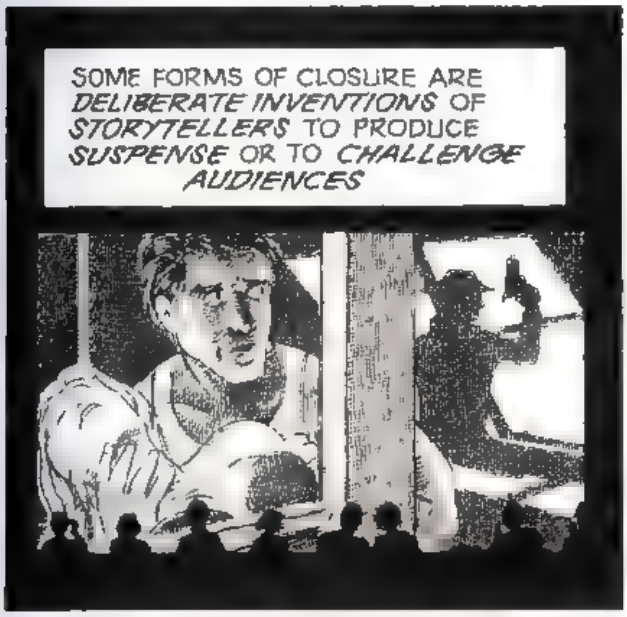
OUR PERCEPTION OF "REALITY" IS AN ACT OF *FAITH*, BASED ON MERE *FRAGMENTS*.

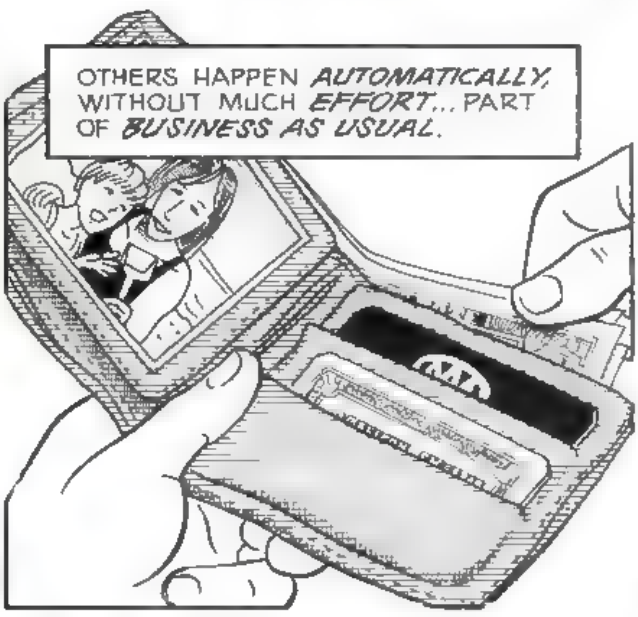
AS *INFANTS*, WE'RE *UNABLE* TO COMMIT THAT ACT OF FAITH. IF WE CAN'T *SEE* IT, *HEAR* IT, *SMELL* IT, *TASTE* IT OR *TOUCH* IT, IT ISN'T *THERE!*

THE GAME "*PEEK-A-BOO*" PLAYS ON THIS IDEA. GRADUALLY, WE ALL LEARN THAT EVEN THOUGH THE *SIGHT* OF MOMMY COMES AND GOES, MOMMY *REMAINS*

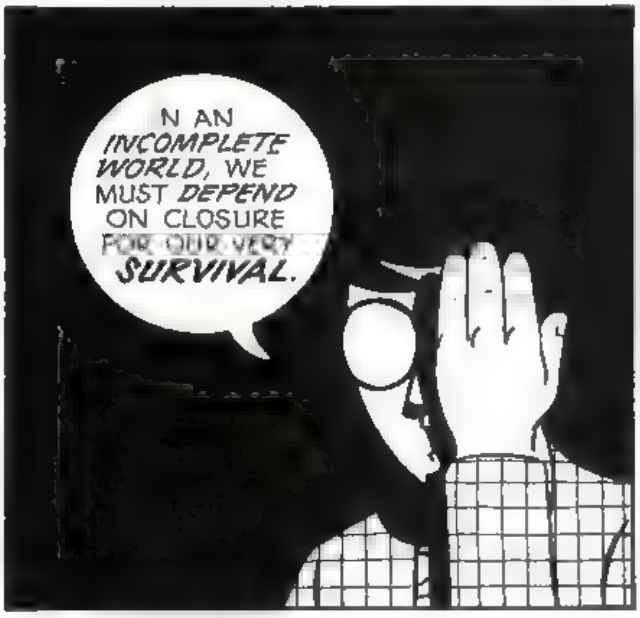

THIS PHENOMENON OF *OBSERVING THE PARTS* BUT *PERCEIVING THE WHOLE* HAS A *NAME*.
IT'S CALLED *CLOSURE*.

IN OUR DAILY LIVES, WE OFTEN COMMIT CLOSURE, MENTALLY COMPLETING THAT WHICH IS *INCOMPLETE* BASED ON *PAST EXPERIENCE*.
SALE
PEPSI
SALE

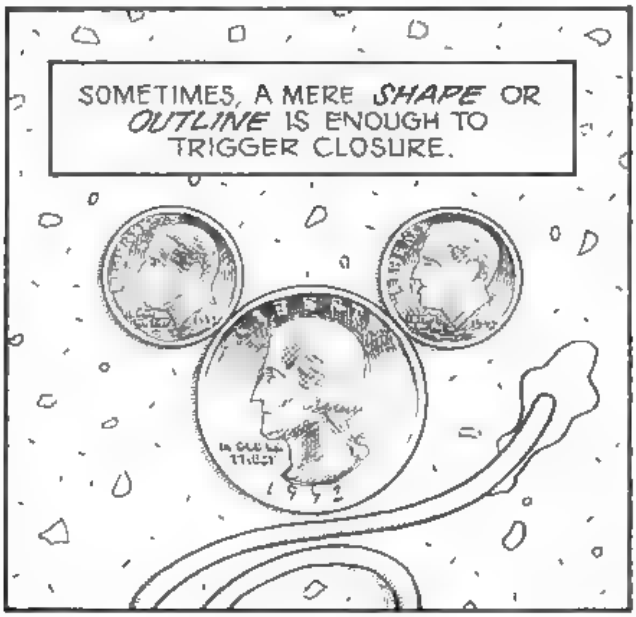

SOME FORMS OF CLOSURE ARE *DELIBERATE INVENTIONS* OF *STORYTELLERS* TO PRODUCE *SUSPENSE* OR TO *CHALLENGE AUDIENCES*


OTHERS HAPPEN *AUTOMATICALLY*, WITHOUT MUCH *EFFORT*... PART OF *BUSINESS AS USUAL*.

IN *RECOGNIZING* AND *RELATING TO OTHER PEOPLE*, WE *ALL* DEPEND *HEAVILY* ON OUR LEARNED ABILITY OF CLOSURE.

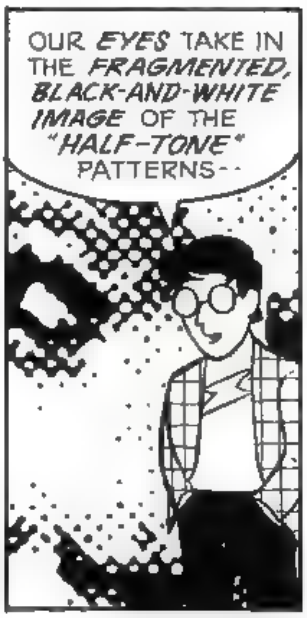

N AN *INCOMPLETE WORLD*, WE MUST *DEPEND* ON CLOSURE FOR OUR VERY *SURVIVAL*.

CLOSURE CAN TAKE MANY FORMS. SOME SIMPLE, SOME COMPLEX.
CLOSURE
CLOSURE
CL S RE


SOMETIMES, A MERE SHAPE OR OUTLINE IS ENOUGH TO TRIGGER CLOSURE.

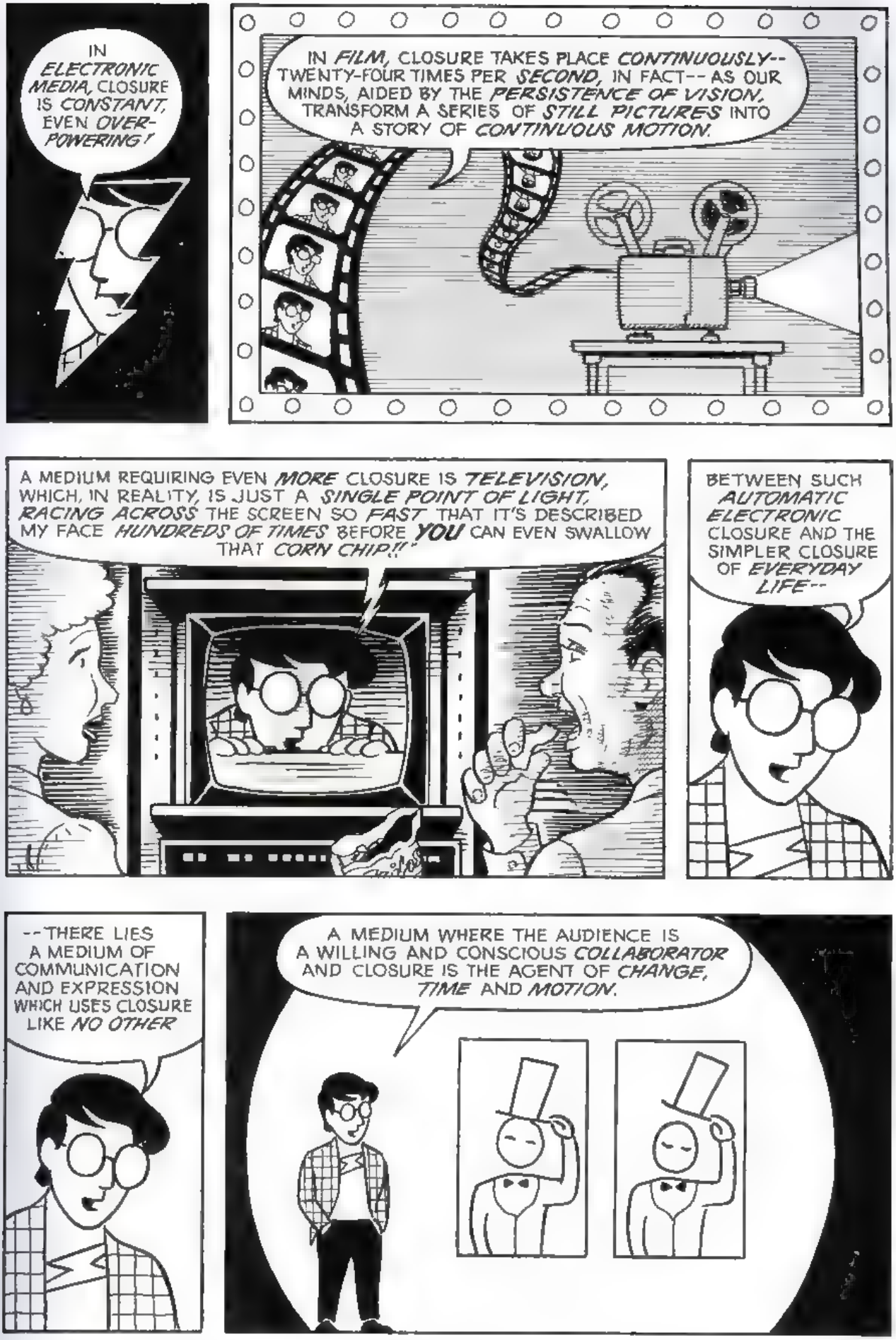
THE MENTAL PROCESS DESCRIBED IN CHAPTER TWO WHEREBY THESE LINES BECOME A FACE COULD BE CONSIDERED CLOSURE

EVERY TIME WE SEE A PHOTOGRAPH REPRODUCED IN A NEWSPAPER OR MAGAZINE, WE COMMIT CLOSURE


OUR EYES TAKE IN THE FRAGMENTED, BLACK-AND-WHITE IMAGE OF THE "HALF-TONE" PATTERNS--

--AND OUR MINDS TRANSFORM IT INTO THE "REALITY"

--OF THE PHOTOGRAPH!


IN *ELECTRONIC MEDIA*, CLOSURE IS *CONSTANT*, EVEN *OVER-POWERING!*
IN *FILM*, CLOSURE TAKES PLACE *CONTINUOUSLY*-- TWENTY-FOUR TIMES PER *SECOND*, IN FACT-- AS OUR MINDS, AIDED BY THE *PERSISTENCE OF VISION*, TRANSFORM A SERIES OF *STILL PICTURES* INTO A STORY OF *CONTINUOUS MOTION*.
A MEDIUM REQUIRING EVEN *MORE* CLOSURE IS *TELEVISION*, WHICH, IN REALITY, IS JUST A *SINGLE POINT OF LIGHT*, *RACING ACROSS* THE SCREEN SO *FAST* THAT IT'S DESCRIBED MY FACE *HUNDREDS OF TIMES* BEFORE ***YOU*** CAN EVEN SWALLOW THAT *CORN CHIP!!*"
BETWEEN SUCH *AUTOMATIC ELECTRONIC* CLOSURE AND THE SIMPLER CLOSURE OF *EVERYDAY LIFE*--
--THERE LIES A MEDIUM OF COMMUNICATION AND EXPRESSION WHICH USES CLOSURE LIKE *NO OTHER*
A MEDIUM WHERE THE AUDIENCE IS A WILLING AND CONSCIOUS *COLLABORATOR* AND CLOSURE IS THE AGENT OF *CHANGE*, *TIME* AND *MOTION*.

* MEDIA GURU TONY SCHWARTZ DESCRIBES THIS AT LENGTH IN HIS BOOK *MEDIA, THE SECOND GOD*, ANCHOR BOOKS, 1983.

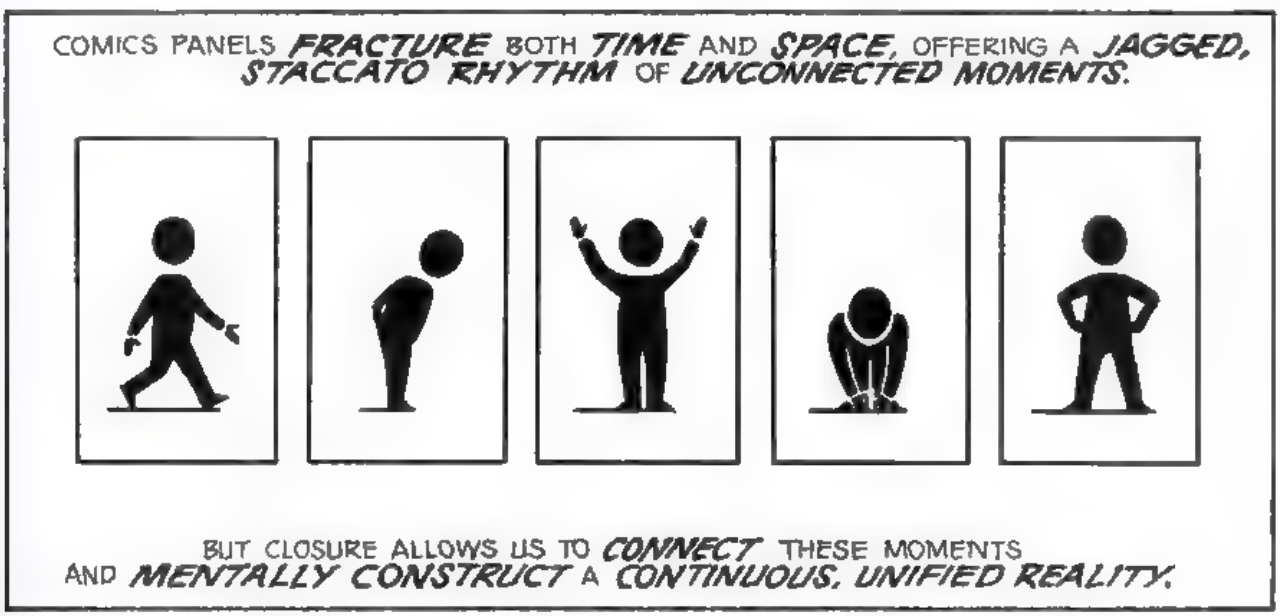
NOW YOU DIE!!
NO!
NO!

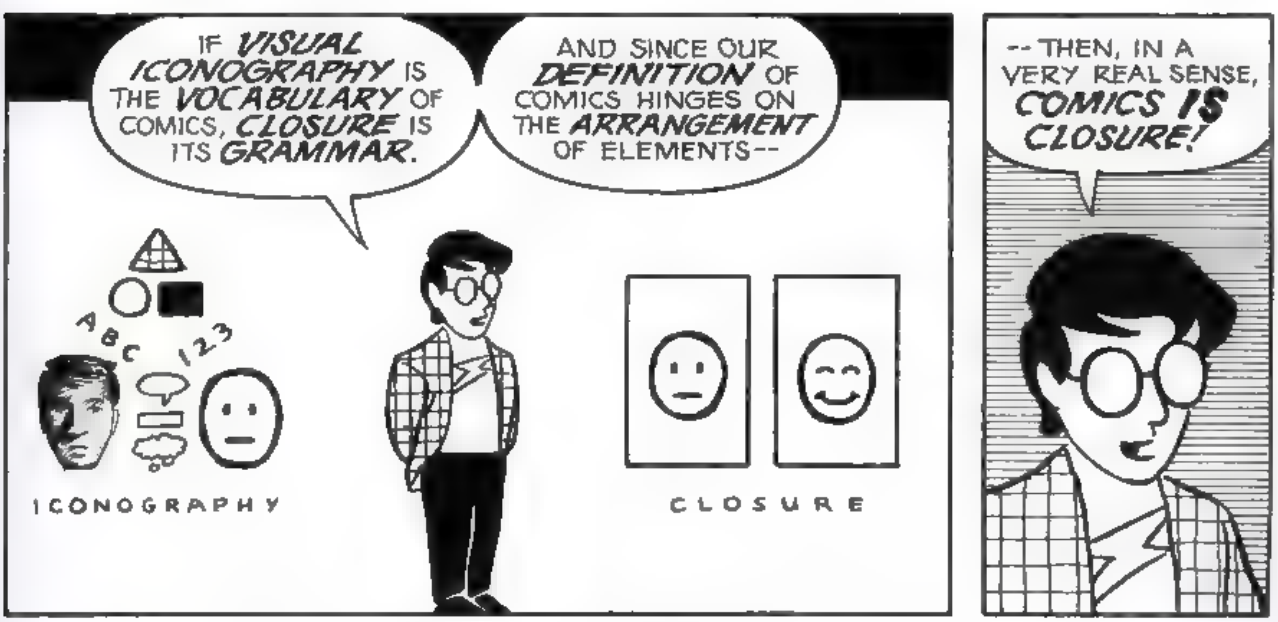
EEYAA!!

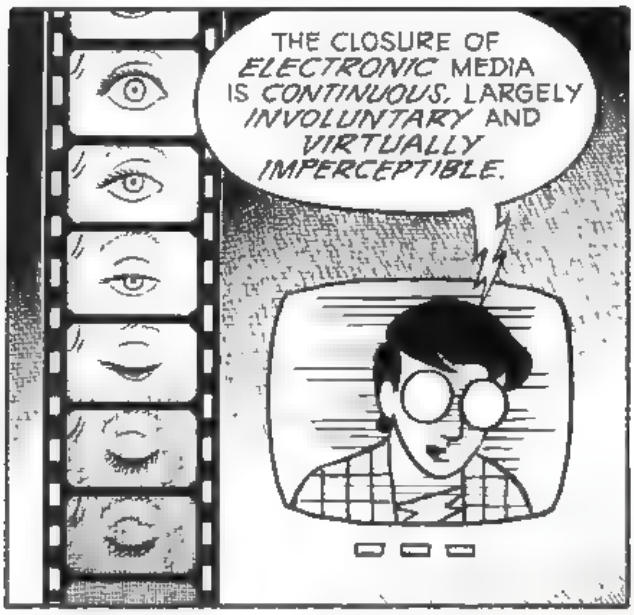
SEE THAT SPACE BETWEEN THE PANELS? THAT'S WHAT COMICS AFICIONADOS HAVE NAMED "THE GUTTER."
AND DESPITE ITS UNCEREMONIOUS TITLE, THE GUTTER PLAYS HOST TO MUCH OF THE MAGIC AND MYSTERY THAT ARE AT THE VERY HEART OF COMICS!

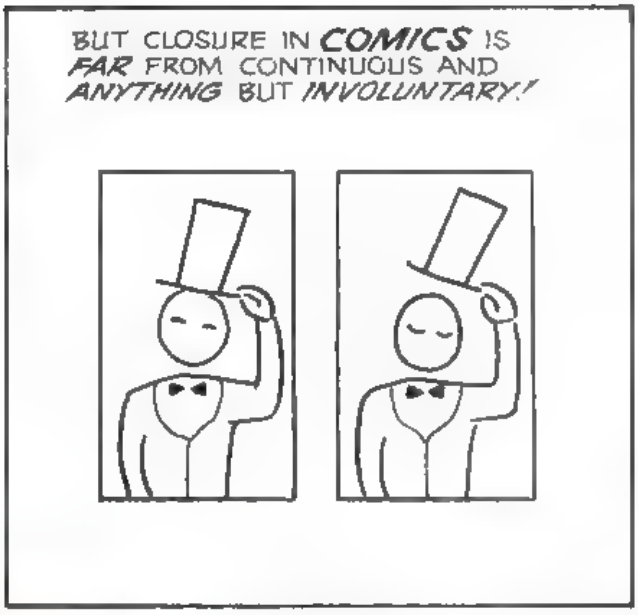
HERE IN THE LIMBO OF THE GUTTER, HUMAN IMAGINATION TAKES TWO SEPARATE IMAGES AND TRANSFORMS THEM INTO A SINGLE IDEA.

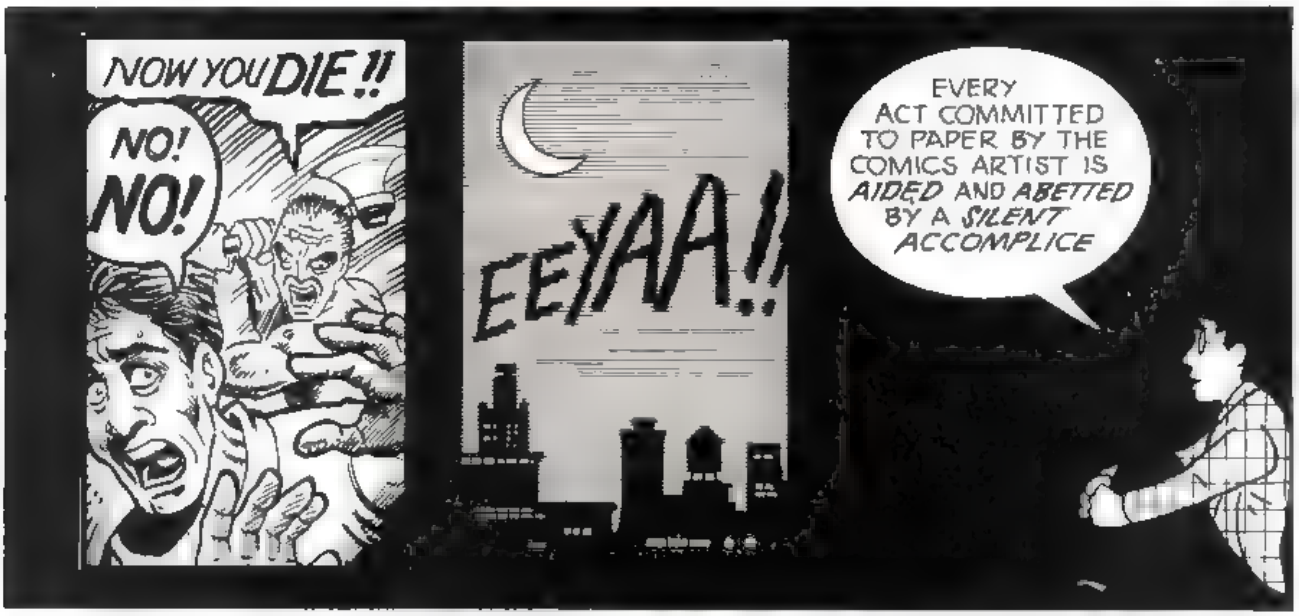
NOTHING IS SEEN BETWEEN THE TWO PANELS, BUT EXPERIENCE TELLS YOU SOMETHING MUST BE THERE!
Peek-A-Boo!
Peek-A-Boo!


COMICS PANELS FRACTURE BOTH TIME AND SPACE, OFFERING A JAGGED, STACCATO RHYTHM OF UNCONNECTED MOMENTS.
BUT CLOSURE ALLOWS US TO CONNECT THESE MOMENTS AND MENTALLY CONSTRUCT A CONTINUOUS, UNIFIED REALITY.

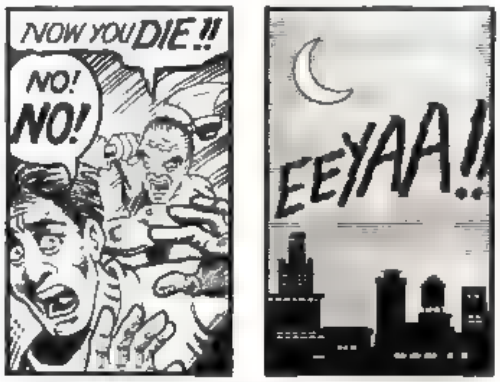

IF VISUAL ICONOGRAPHY IS THE VOCABULARY OF COMICS, CLOSURE IS ITS GRAMMAR.
AND SINCE OUR DEFINITION OF COMICS HINGES ON THE ARRANGEMENT OF ELEMENTS--
ABC 123
ICONOGRAPHY
CLOSURE
--THEN, IN A VERY REAL SENSE, COMICS IS CLOSURE!



I MAY HAVE DRAWN AN AXE BEING RAISED IN THIS EXAMPLE, BUT I'M NOT THE ONE WHO LET IT DROP OR DECIDED HOW HARD THE BLOW, OR WHO SCREAMED, OR WHY.

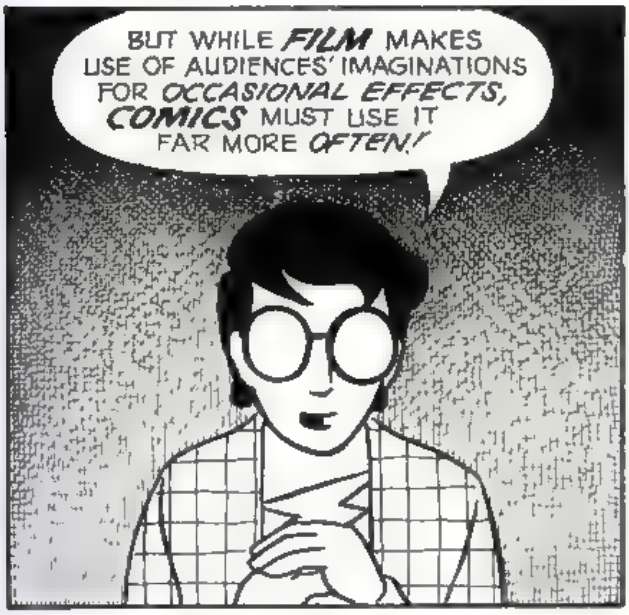



THAT, DEAR READER, WAS YOUR SPECIAL CRIME, EACH OF YOU COMMITTING IT IN YOUR OWN STYLE.

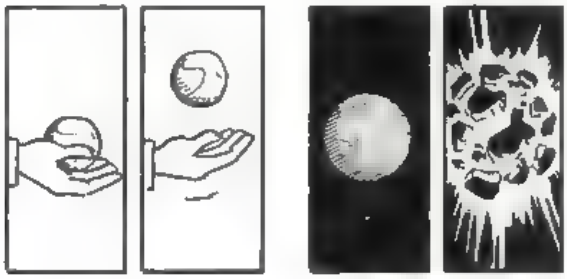
TO KILL A MAN BETWEEN PANELS IS TO CONDEMN HIM TO A THOUSAND DEATHS.

*PARTICIPATION* IS A *POWERFUL FORCE* IN *ANY* MEDIUM FILMMAKERS *LONG AGO* REALIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF ALLOWING VIEWERS TO USE THEIR *IMAGINATIONS.*

BUT WHILE *FILM* MAKES USE OF AUDIENCES' IMAGINATIONS FOR *OCCASIONAL EFFECTS,* *COMICS* MUST USE IT FAR MORE *OFTEN!*

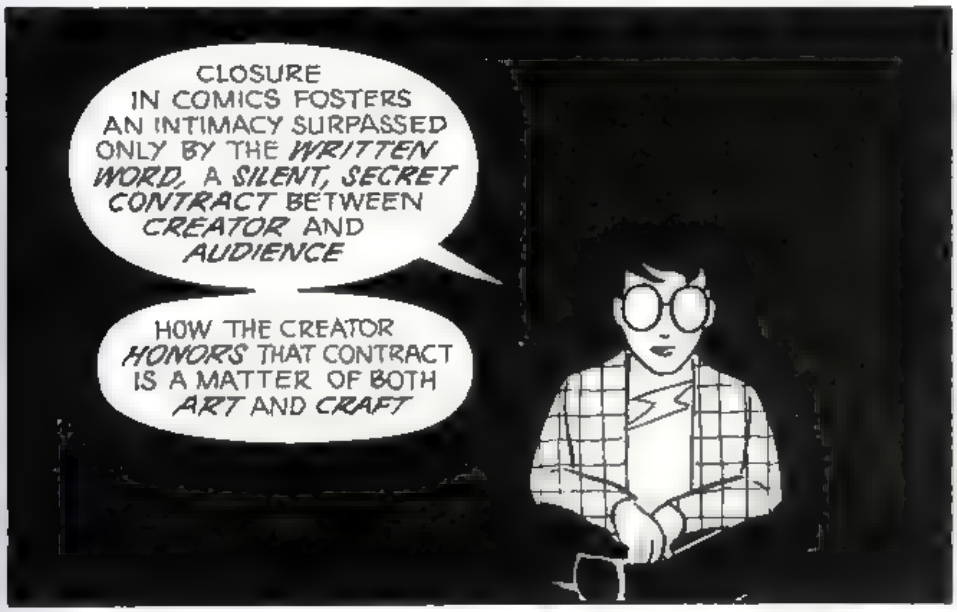


FROM THE *TOSSING* OF A *BASEBALL* TO THE *DEATH OF A PLANET,* THE READER'S *DELIBERATE, VOLUNTARY* *CLOSURE* IS COMICS' *PRIMARY* MEANS OF SIMULATING *TIME AND MOTION.*



CLOSURE IN COMICS FOSTERS AN INTIMACY SURPASSED ONLY BY THE *WRITTEN WORD,* A *SILENT, SECRET* *CONTRACT* BETWEEN *CREATOR* AND *AUDIENCE*

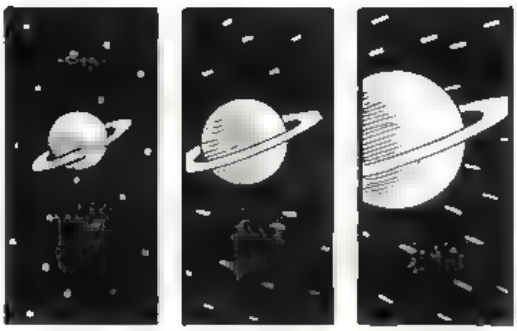
HOW THE CREATOR *HONORS* THAT CONTRACT IS A MATTER OF BOTH *ART* AND *CRAFT*

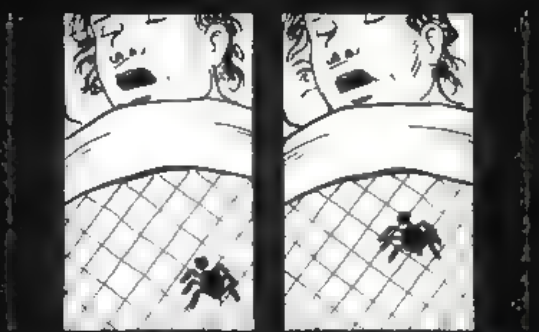


LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT THE *CRAFT.*

MOST *PANEL-TO-PANEL* TRANSITIONS IN COMICS CAN BE PLACED IN ONE OF SEVERAL DISTINCT *CATEGORIES*. THE *FIRST* CATEGORY -- WHICH WE'LL CALL ***MOMENT-TO-MOMENT***--REQUIRES VERY *LITTLE* CLOSURE

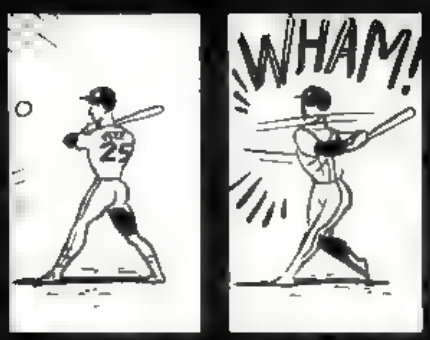
1.

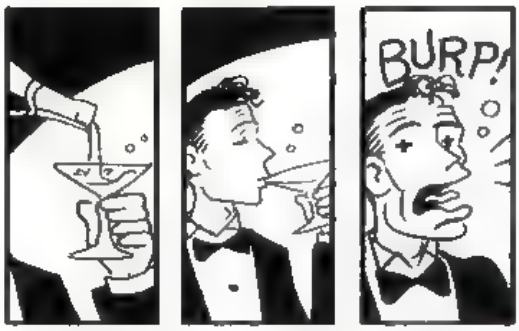


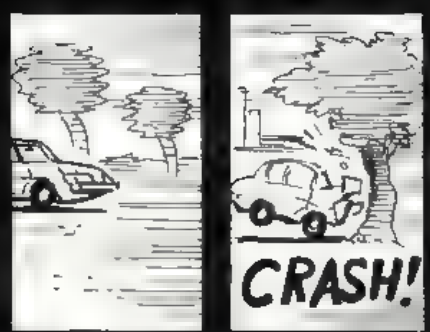


*NEXT* ARE THOSE TRANSITIONS FEATURING A SINGLE *SUBJECT* IN DISTINCT ***ACTION-TO-ACTION*** PROGRESSIONS

2.



THE *NEXT* TYPE TAKES US FROM ***SUBJECT-TO-SUBJECT*** WHILE STAYING WITHIN A SCENE OR IDEA. NOTE THE DEGREE OF *READER INVOLVEMENT* NECESSARY TO RENDER THESE TRANSITIONS *MEANINGFUL*

3.

*DEDUCTIVE REASONING* IS OFTEN REQUIRED IN READING COMICS SUCH AS IN THESE ***SCENE--TO-SCENE*** TRANSITIONS, WHICH TRANSPORT US ACROSS *SIGNIFICANT DISTANCES* OF *TIME* AND *SPACE*.

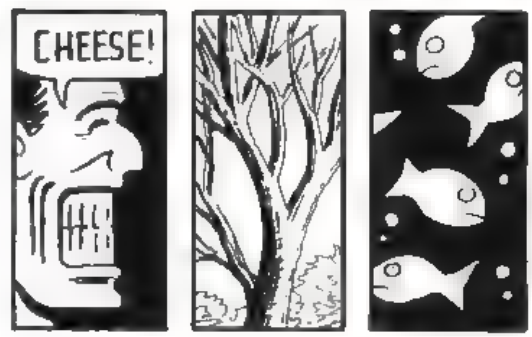
4.

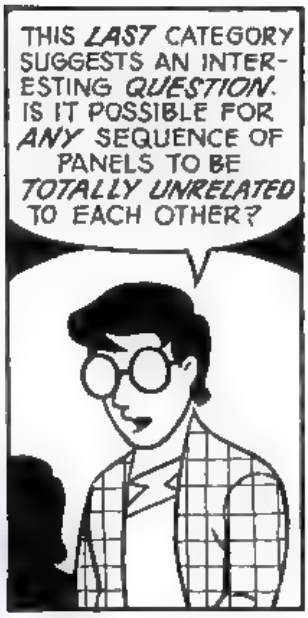
A *FIFTH* TYPE OF TRANSITION, WHICH WE'LL CALL ***ASPECT-TO-ASPECT,*** BYPASSES *TIME* FOR THE MOST PART AND SETS A *WANDERING EYE* ON DIFFERENT *ASPECTS* OF A PLACE, IDEA OR MOOD

5.

AND FINALLY, THERE'S THE ***NON-SEQUITUR,*** WHICH OFFERS NO LOGICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PANELS *WHATSOEVER!*

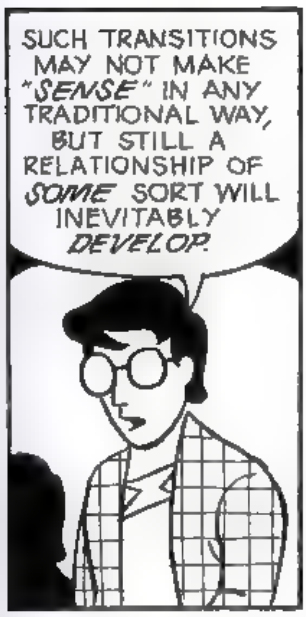
6.




THIS *LAST* CATEGORY SUGGESTS AN INTERESTING *QUESTION*. IS IT POSSIBLE FOR *ANY* SEQUENCE OF PANELS TO BE *TOTALLY UNRELATED* TO EACH OTHER?

PERSONALLY, I DON'T *THINK* SO
NO MATTER HOW *DISSIMILAR* ONE IMAGE MAY BE TO ANOTHER, THERE IS A KIND OF--

*--ALCHEMY* AT WORK IN THE SPACE BETWEEN PANELS WHICH CAN HELP US FIND *MEANING* OR *RESONANCE* IN EVEN THE MOST *JARRING* OF COMBINATIONS.


SUCH TRANSITIONS MAY NOT MAKE *"SENSE"* IN ANY TRADITIONAL WAY, BUT STILL A RELATIONSHIP OF *SOME* SORT WILL INEVITABLY *DEVELOP*.

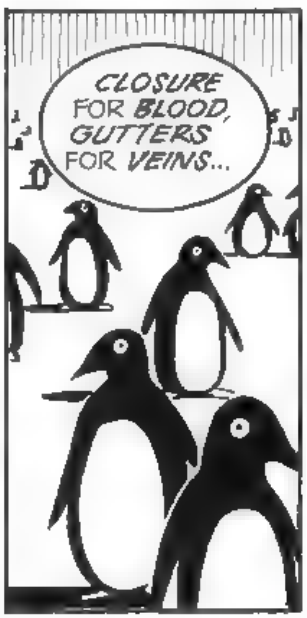
BANG!

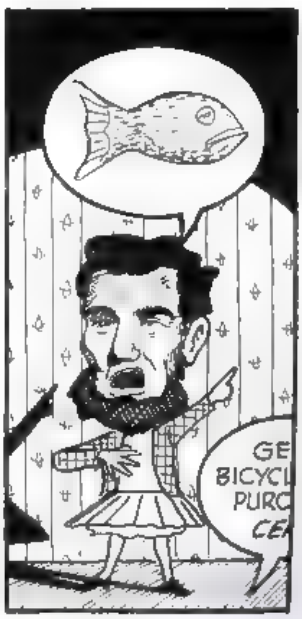
BY CREATING A *SEQUENCE* WITH TWO OR MORE IMAGES, WE ARE *ENDOWING* THEM WITH A *SINGLE*--

*--OVERRIDING IDENTITY*, AND *FORCING* THE VIEWER TO CONSIDER THEM AS A *WHOLE*.

HOWEVER *DIFFERENT* THEY HAD BEEN, THEY NOW BELONG TO A *SINGLE ORGANISM*

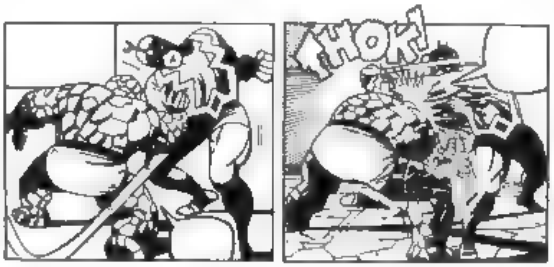
DANGER!!!!!


*CLOSURE* FOR *BLOOD*, *GUTTERS* FOR *VEINS*...


GE
BICYCL
PURC
CE

1.
MOMENT-TO-MOMENT
2.
WHAM!
ACTION-TO-ACTION
3.
CLIK!
SUBJECT-TO-SUBJECT
4.
TEN YEAR LATER
SCENE-TO-SCENE
5.
ASPECT-TO-ASPECT
6.
NON-SEQUITUR
THIS SORT OF CATEGORIZATION IS AN INEXACT SCIENCE AT BEST, BUT BY USING OUR TRANSITION SCALE AS A TOOL--
--WE CAN BEGIN TO UNRAVEL SOME OF THE MYSTERIES SURROUNDING THE INVISIBLE ART OF COMICS STORYTELLING!
MOST MAINSTREAM COMICS IN AMERICA EMPLOY STORYTELLING TECHNIQUES FIRST INTRODUCED BY JACK KIRBY, SO LET'S START BY EXAMINING THIS LEE-KIRBY COMIC FROM 1966.
Fantastic Four
ALTOGETHER, I COUNT NINETY-FIVE PANEL-TO-PANEL TRANSITIONS LET'S SEE HOW THEY BREAK DOWN PROPORTIONATELY.

BY FAR, THE MOST COMMON TYPE OF TRANSITION IN KIRBY'S ART IS ***ACTION-TO-ACTION.*** I COUNT *SIXTY-TWO* OF THEM IN THIS STORY-- ABOUT *SIXTY-FIVE PERCENT* OF THE TOTAL NUMBER




[TRACED AND SIMPLIFIED FOR CLARITY'S SAKE]

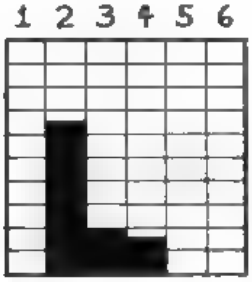
***SUBJECT-TO-SUBJECT*** TRANSITIONS ACCOUNT FOR AN ADDITIONAL *NINETEEN*-- ABOUT *TWENTY PERCENT* OF THE TOTAL NUMBER.

ART © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC.

AND SINCE **ALL** OF THE REMAINING TRANSITIONS ARE FROM **SCENE-TO-SCENE**, WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING **BREAKDOWN**.

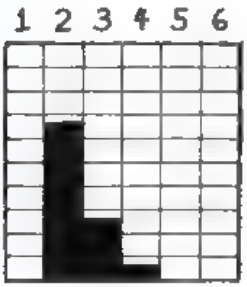
| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | — |
| 2 | 65% |
| 3 | 20% |
| 4 | 15% |
| 5 | — |
| 6 | — |

AS A **BAR GRAPH** IT WOULD LOOK SOMETHING LIKE **THIS**.

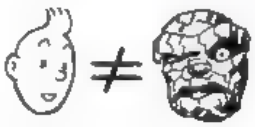



THIS EMPHASIS ON **ACTION-TO-ACTION** STORYTELLING SUITS MOST PEOPLE'S IDEAS ABOUT **KIRBY**, BUT IS HE **UNIQUE** IN THIS RESPECT?

APPARENTLY **NOT**! HERE'S A GRAPH OF PANEL TRANSITIONS IN HERGÉ'S **TINTIN** AND THE PROPORTION ARE VERY **SIMILAR** TO KIRBY'S



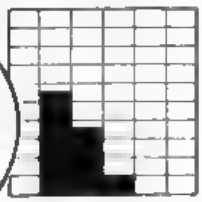
NOW, HERGÉ'S AND KIRBY'S STYLES ARE **NOT** SIMILAR! IN FACT, THEY'RE **RADICALLY DIFFERENT**!!



IS THERE SOME KIND OF **UNIVERSAL PROPORTION** AT WORK HERE, OR IS THERE ANOTHER **COMMON LINK**? MAYBE A SIMILARITY OF **GENRES**?

A RANDOM SAMPLING OF VARIOUS AMERICAN COMICS SHOWS THIS SAME PROPORTION PRETTY **CONSISTENTLY**.

X-MEN #1



CLAREMONT & LEE

"HEARTBREAK SOUP"

G HERNANDEZ

BETTY & VERONICA

DOYLE & DECARLO

NAUGHTY BITS

GREGORY

FRANK IN THE RIVER

WOODRING

A CONTRACT WITH GOD

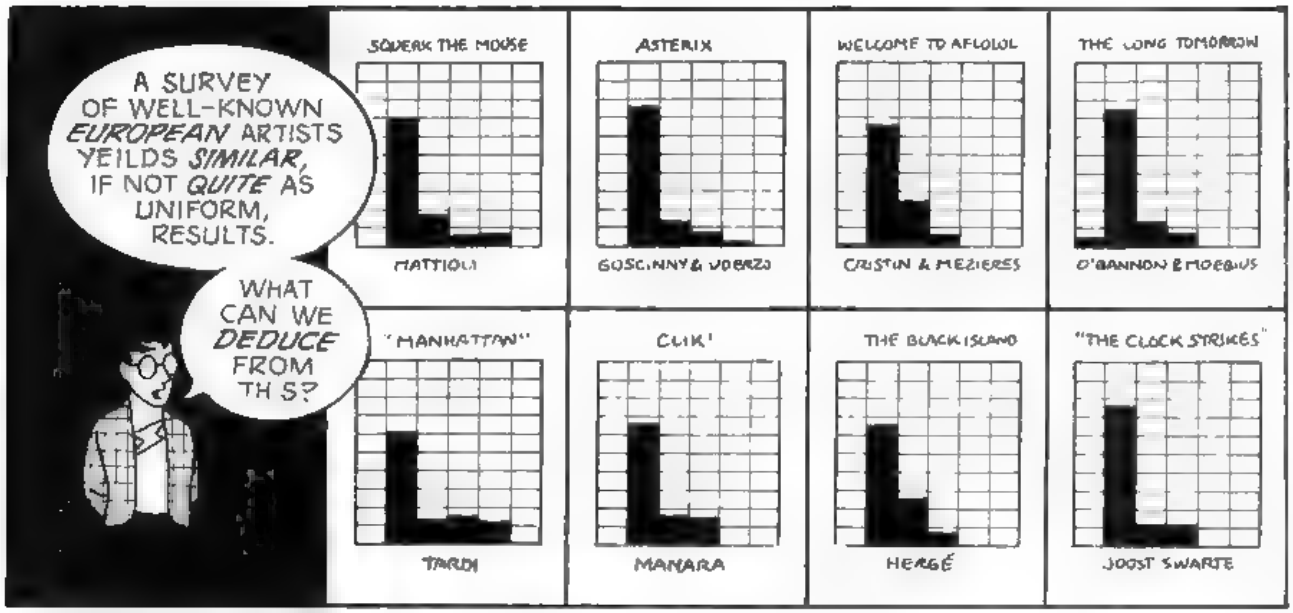
EISNER

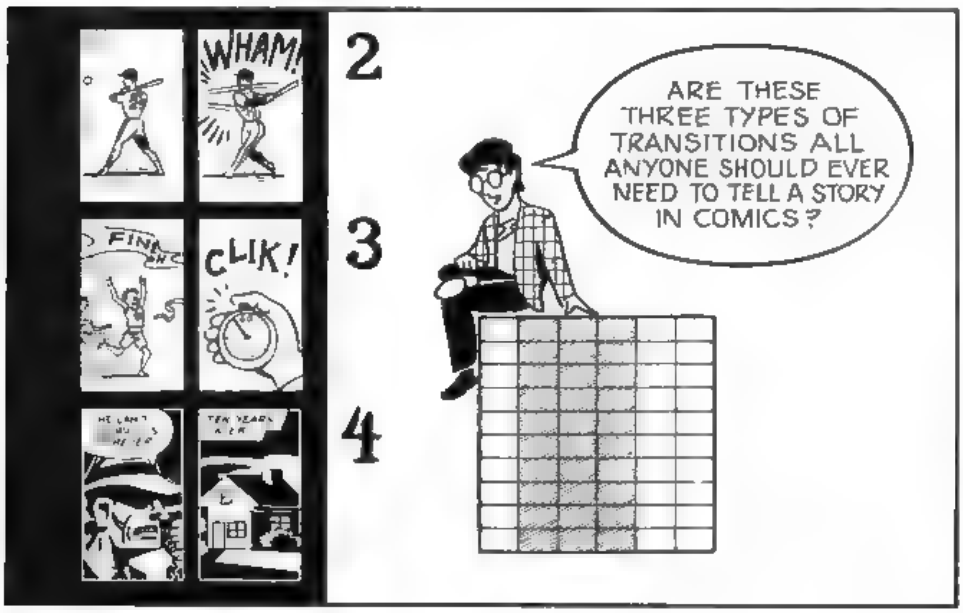
MAUS

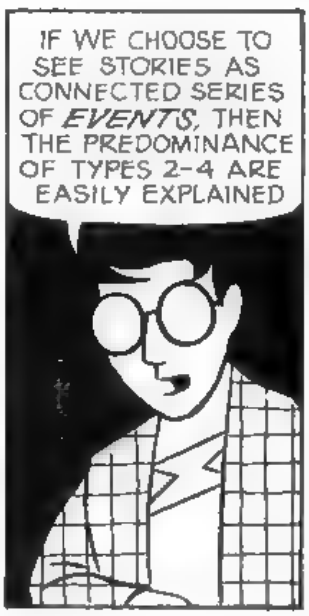
SPIEGELMAN

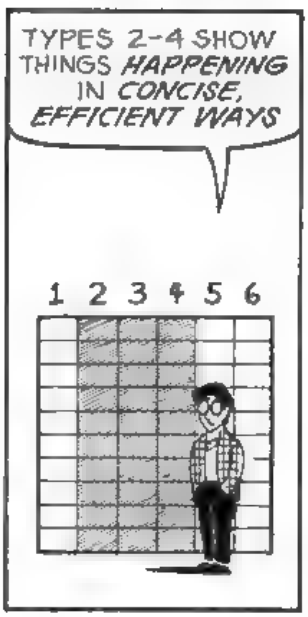
DONALD DUCK

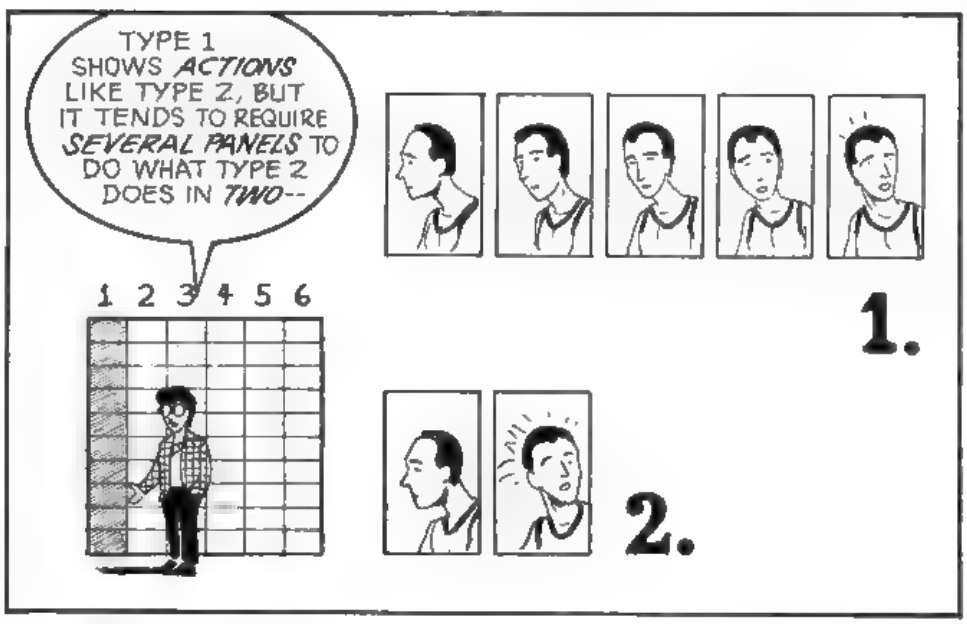
BARKS


A SURVEY OF WELL-KNOWN *EUROPEAN* ARTISTS YEILDS *SIMILAR*, IF NOT *QUITE* AS UNIFORM, RESULTS.
WHAT CAN WE *DEDUCE* FROM TH S?
SQUEAK THE MOUSE
MATTIOLI
ASTERIX
GOSCINNY & UDERZO
WELCOME TO AFLOLOL
CRUSTIN & MEZIERES
THE LONG TOMORROW
O'BANNON & MOEBIUS
"MANHATTAN"
TARDI
CLIK!
MANARA
THE BLACK ISLAND
HERGÉ
"THE CLOCK STRIKES"
JOOST SWARTE

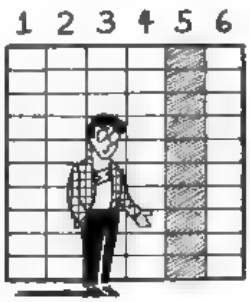

WHAM!
CLIK!
2
3
4
ARE THESE THREE TYPES OF TRANSITIONS ALL ANYONE SHOULD EVER NEED TO TELL A STORY IN COMICS?

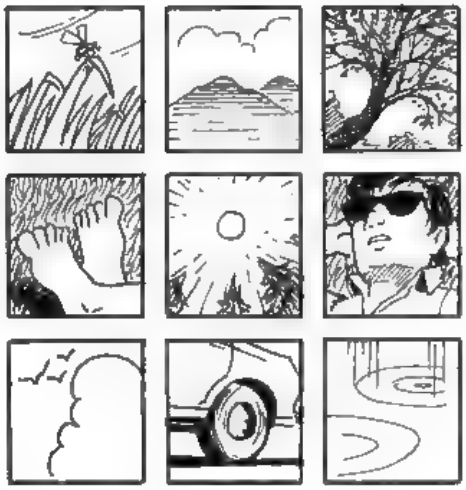

IF WE CHOOSE TO SEE STORIES AS CONNECTED SERIES OF *EVENTS*, THEN THE PREDOMINANCE OF TYPES 2-4 ARE EASILY EXPLAINED


TYPES 2-4 SHOW THINGS *HAPPENING* IN *CONCISE, EFFICIENT WAYS*
1 2 3 4 5 6

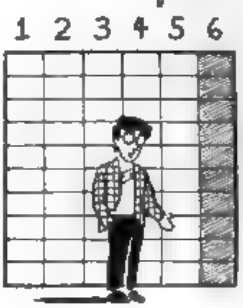

TYPE 1 SHOWS *ACTIONS* LIKE TYPE 2, BUT IT TENDS TO REQUIRE *SEVERAL PANELS* TO DO WHAT TYPE 2 DOES IN *TWO*--
1 2 3 4 5 6
1.
2.

--WHILE IN THE *FIFTH* TYPE, BY DEFINITION, NOTHING *"HAPPENS"* AT ALL!



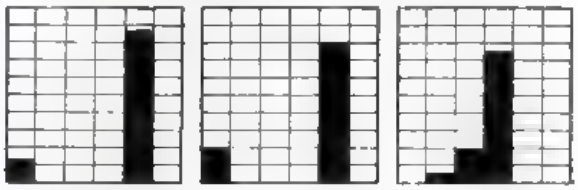
AND, OF COURSE, NON-SEQUITURS ARE UNCONCERNED WITH *EVENTS* OR ANY *NARRATIVE* PURPOSES OF ANY SORT



SOME *EXPERIMENTAL COMICS*, LIKE THOSE OF *ART SPIEGELMAN'S* EARLY PERIOD, EXPLORE A *FULL RANGE* OF TRANSITIONS--

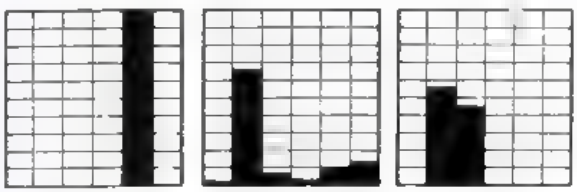
--THOUGH GENERALLY IN THE SERVICE OF EQUALLY RADICAL STORIES AND SUBJECTS.

*STORIES FROM SPIEGELMAN'S ANTHOLOGY* ***BREAKDOWNS***



*"DON'T GET AROUND MUCH ANYMORE"* *INTRODUCTION* *"MAUS" (ORIGINAL)*

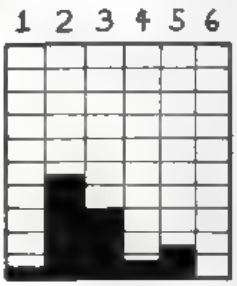
*"SKINLESS PERKINS"* *"PRISONER ON THE HELL PLANET"* *"CRACKING JOKES"*

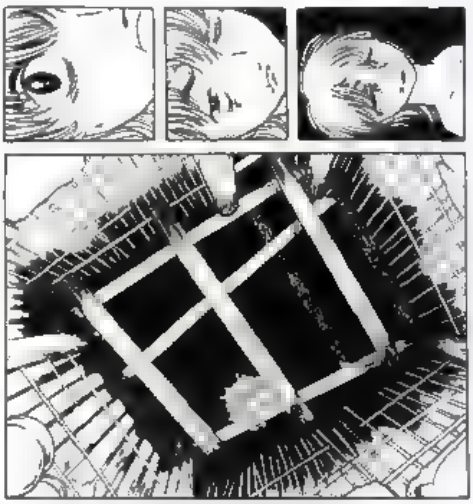


*FRONT AND BACK COVERS* *"ACE-HOLE, MIDGET DETECTIVE"* *"REAL DREAM" 1975*

BUT BEFORE WE CONCLUDE THAT TYPES 2-4 HAVE A MONOPOLY ON *STRAIGHTFORWARD* STORYTELLING, LET'S TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT ***OSAMU TEZUKA*** FROM *JAPAN*

TEZUKA IS A *FAR CRY* FROM THE EARLY SPIEGELMAN. HIS STORYTELLING IS CLEAR AND STRAIGHTFORWARD. ***BUT LOOK AT HOW HE CHARTS!***



JUST WHAT IS ***GOING ON*** HERE?

ART © OSAMU TEZUKA

ACTION--TO-ACTION TRANSITIONS STILL DOMINATE IN TEZUKA'S WORK, BUT TO A *LESSER DEGREE*

FINA

CLIK!

3

IN FACT, *SUBJECT-TO-SUBJECT* TRANSITIONS ACCOUNT FOR NEARLY AS MANY AS *ACTION*

そっ

1

HERE ALSO WE SEE OUR FIRST EXAMPLES OF *MOMENT-TO-MOMENT* TRANSITIONS

THOUGH THE LATTER TYPE ONLY ACCOUNTS FOR *FOUR PERCENT* OF THE TOTAL, SUCH SEQUENCES CONTRAST STRIKINGLY WITH THE WESTERN TRADITIONS EXEMPLIFIED BY KIRBY AND HERGÉ.

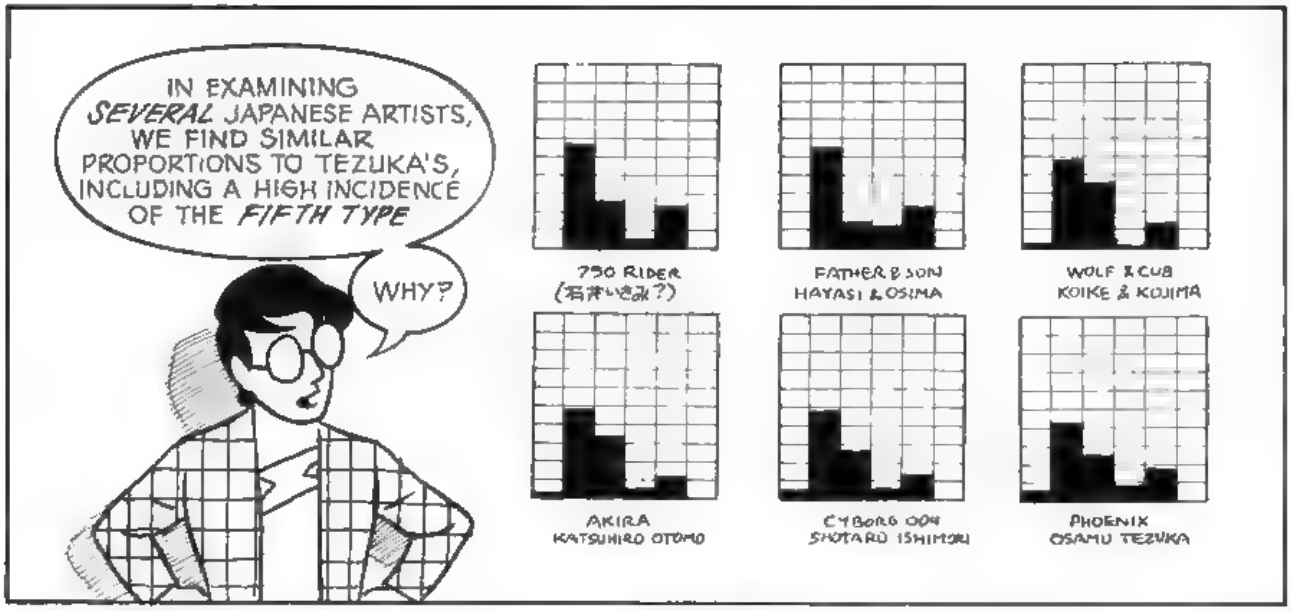
5

BUT, MOST STRIKING OF *ALL* IS THE *SUBSTANTIAL PRESENCE* OF THE *FIFTH TYPE* OF TRANSITION, A TYPE RARELY SEEN IN THE WEST

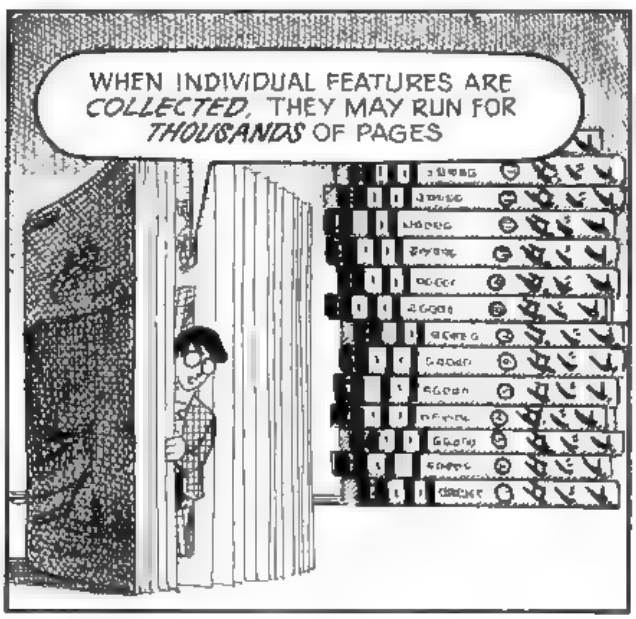
ART © OSAMU TEZUKA

!TFEL OT THGIR DAER OT REMMEMER

ASPECT-TO-ASPECT TRANSITIONS HAVE BEEN AN INTEGRAL PART OF JAPANESE MAINSTREAM COMICS ALMOST FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.
水木は 夜の 古寺にいって みることにした
ART © SHIGERU MIZUKI
MOST OFTEN USED TO ESTABLISH A MOOD OR A SENSE OF PLACE, TIME SEEMS TO STAND STILL IN THESE QUIET, CONTEMPLATIVE COMBINATIONS.
EVEN SEQUENCE, WHILE STILL AN ISSUE, SEEMS FAR LESS IMPORTANT HERE THAN IN OTHER TRANSITIONS.
ART © OSAMU TEZUKA
RATHER THAN ACTING AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN SEPARATE MOMENTS, THE READER HERE MUST ASSEMBLE A SINGLE MOMENT USING SCATTERED FRAGMENTS.
JASH
ART © H. SATO

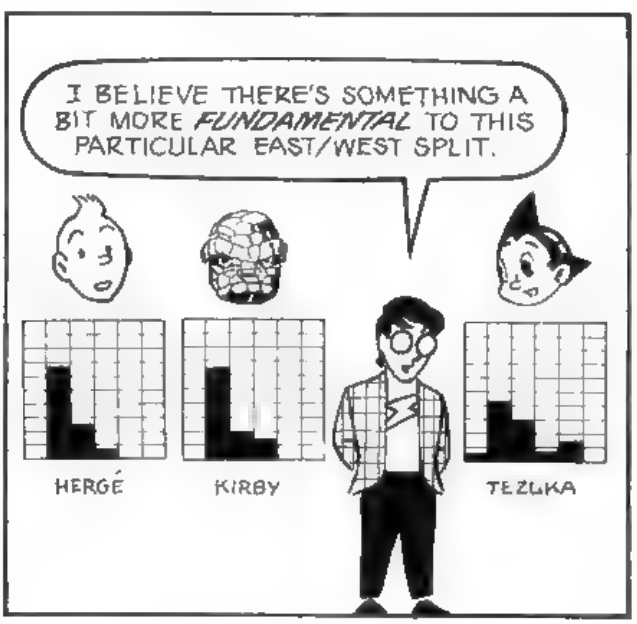

IN EXAMINING SEVERAL JAPANESE ARTISTS, WE FIND SIMILAR PROPORTIONS TO TEZUKA'S, INCLUDING A HIGH INCIDENCE OF THE FIFTH TYPE
WHY?
750 RIDER (石津いさお?)
FATHER & SON HAYASI & OSIMA
WOLF & CUB KOIKE & KOJIMA
AKIRA KATSUHIRO OTOMO
CYBORG 004 SHOTARO ISHIMORI
PHOENIX OSAMU TEZUKA

LENGTH MAY BE ONE OF THE FACTORS AT WORK HERE. MOST JAPANESE COMICS FIRST APPEAR IN ENORMOUS ANTHOLOGY TITLES WHERE THE PRESSURE ISN'T AS GREAT ON ANY ONE INSTALLMENT TO SHOW A LOT "HAPPENING."


WHEN INDIVIDUAL FEATURES ARE COLLECTED, THEY MAY RUN FOR THOUSANDS OF PAGES

AS SUCH, DOZENS OF PANELS CAN BE DEVOTED TO PORTRAYING SLOW CINEMATIC MOVEMENT OR TO SETTING A MOOD.

BUT I DON'T THINK LONGER STORIES ARE THE ONLY FACTOR, OR EVEN THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE.


I BELIEVE THERE'S SOMETHING A BIT MORE FUNDAMENTAL TO THIS PARTICULAR EAST/WEST SPLIT.
HERGÉ
KIRBY
TEZUKA

MMM... WHERE WAS I?
OH, YES ...

TRADITIONAL WESTERN ART AND LITERATURE DON'T WANDER MUCH. ON THE WHOLE, WE'RE A PRETTY GOAL-ORIENTED CULTURE.

BUT, IN THE EAST, THERE'S A RICH TRADITION OF CYCLICAL AND LABYRINTHINE WORKS OF ART

JAPANESE COMICS MAY BE HEIRS TO THIS TRADITION, IN THE WAY THEY SO OFTEN EMPHASIZE BEING THERE OVER GETTING THERE

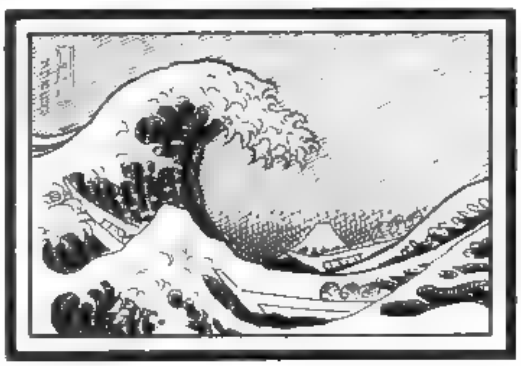
THROUGH THESE AND OTHER STORYTELLING TECHNIQUES, THE JAPANESE OFFER A VISION OF COMICS VERY DIFFERENT FROM OUR OWN

FOR IN JAPAN MORE THAN ANYWHERE ELSE, COMICS IS AN ART--

--OF *INTERVALS.*

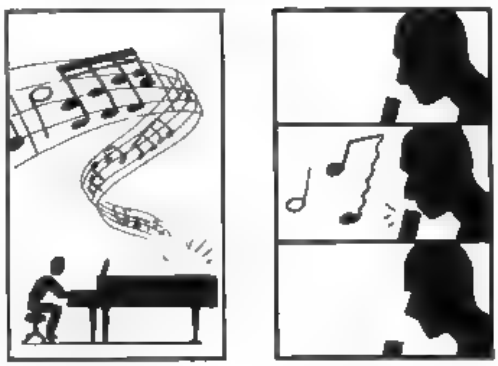
THE IDEA THAT ELEMENTS *OMITTED* FROM A WORK OF ART ARE AS MUCH A PART OF THAT WORK AS THOSE *INCLUDED* HAS BEEN A SPECIALTY OF THE *EAST* FOR *CENTURIES*

IN THE GRAPHIC ARTS THIS HAS MEANT A GREATER FOCUS ON *FIGURE/GROUND* RELATIONSHIPS AND *"NEGATIVE SPACE."*



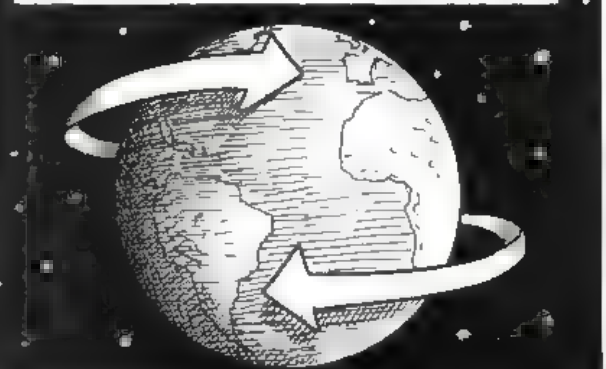
"THE GREAT WAVE OFF KANAG'AWA" BY HOKUSAI (c 1829) (TURN THIS PICTURE UPSIDE DOWN TO SEE THE *OTHER* WAVE OF NEGATIVE SPACE. NATURE'S *YIN AND YANG.*)

IN MUSIC TOO, WHILE THE WESTERN CLASSICAL TRADITION WAS EMPHASIZING THE *CONTINUOUS, CONNECTED* WORLDS OF MELODY AND HARMONY, EASTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC WAS EQUALLY CONCERNED WITH THE ROLE OF *SILENCE!*

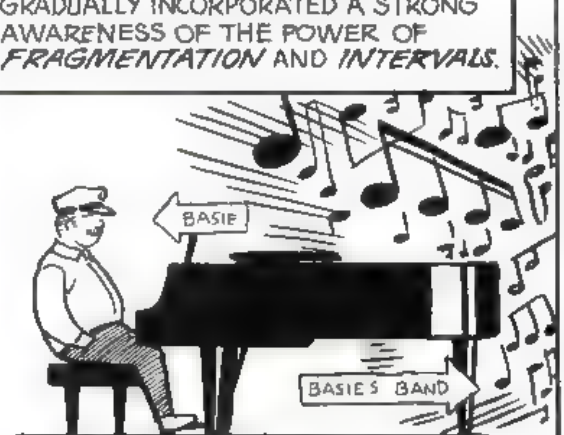


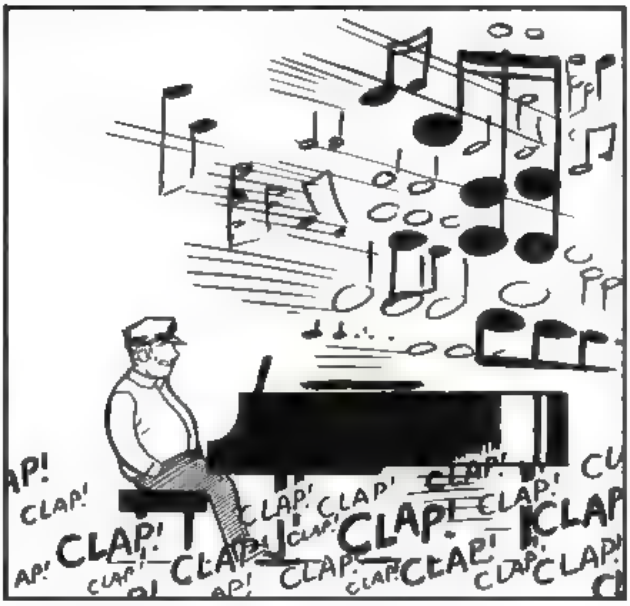
*WEST* *EAST*

IN THE LAST *CENTURY* OR TWO, AS *WESTERN* CULTURAL INFLUENCES SWEPT THE *EAST,* SO TOO HAVE *EASTERN* AND *AFRICAN* IDEAS OF *FRAGMENTATION* AND *RHYTHM* SWEPT THE *WEST.*



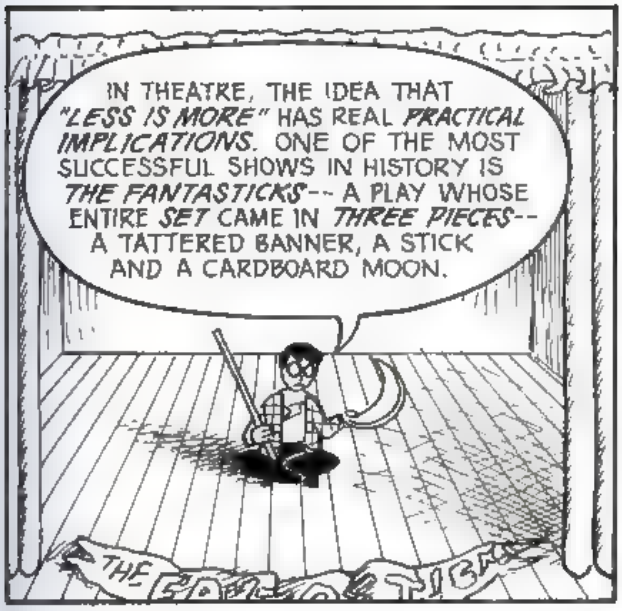
FROM *DEBUSSY* TO *STRAVINSKY* TO *COUNT BASIE,* WESTERN MUSIC HAS GRADUALLY INCORPORATED A STRONG AWARENESS OF THE POWER OF *FRAGMENTATION* AND *INTERVALS.*

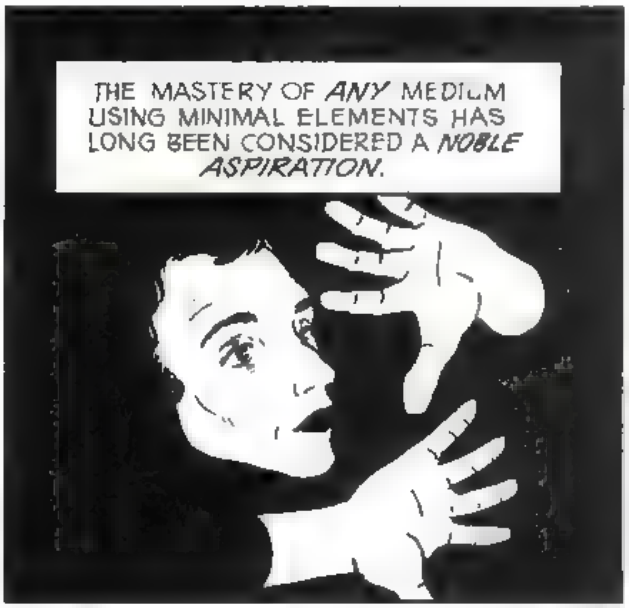




THE TRADITIONAL EMPHASIS IN WESTERN ART UPON THE PRIMACY OF *FOREGROUND* SUBJECTS AND *CONTINUOUSNESS* OF *TONES* GAVE WAY TO *FRAGMENTATION* AND A NEW AWARENESS OF THE *PICTURE PLANE*.

FACSIMILE OF "FIGURE" BY PABLO PICASSO 1910

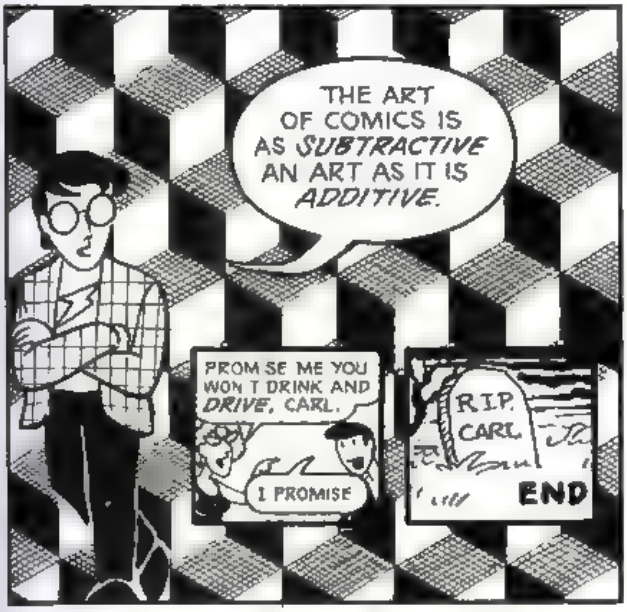

IN THEATRE, THE IDEA THAT *"LESS IS MORE"* HAS REAL *PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS*. ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL SHOWS IN HISTORY IS *THE FANTASTICKS*-- A PLAY WHOSE ENTIRE *SET* CAME IN *THREE PIECES*-- A TATTERED BANNER, A STICK AND A CARDBOARD MOON.



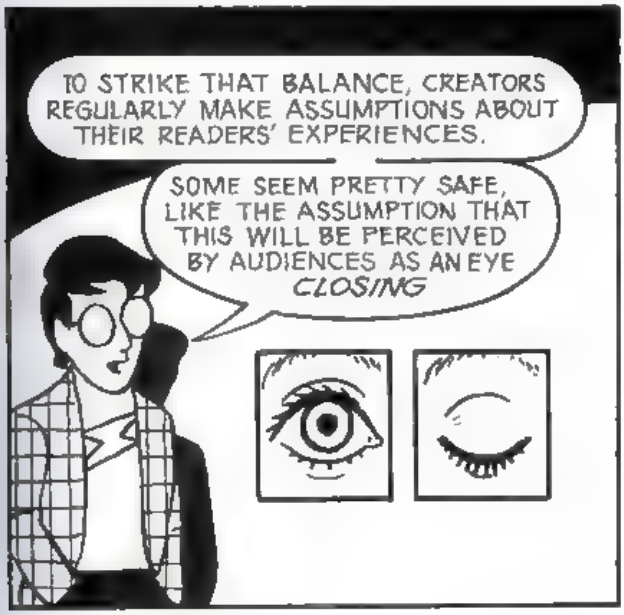

*ANSWER: "THE BIG 'N'"
[SEE PAGE 216]

* BRUM APPEARS COURTESY OF M FEAZELL

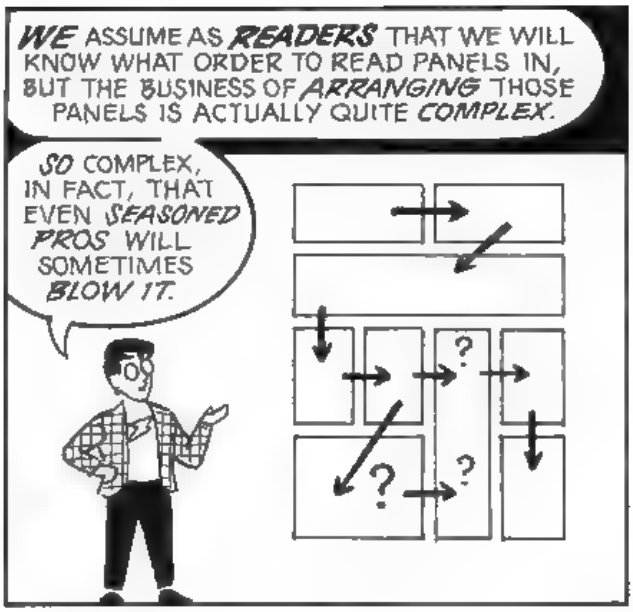
HERE'S A STORY
PROMISE ME YOU WON'T DRINK AND DRIVE, CARL
I PROMISE
BRUM!
HERE I AM!
HI, CARL!
HI, DAISY!
I'M SORRY CARL, BUT I CAN'T GO OUT WITH YOU TONIGHT
AWW!
WHAT'LL I DO NOW?
I'LL BUY SOME BEERS
GLUG! GLUG! BUD
CRASH!
RIP CARL
END
HERE'S A STORY
PROMISE ME YOU WON'T DRINK AND DRIVE, CARL
I PROMISE
GLUG! GLUG! BUD
CRASH!
RIP CARL
END

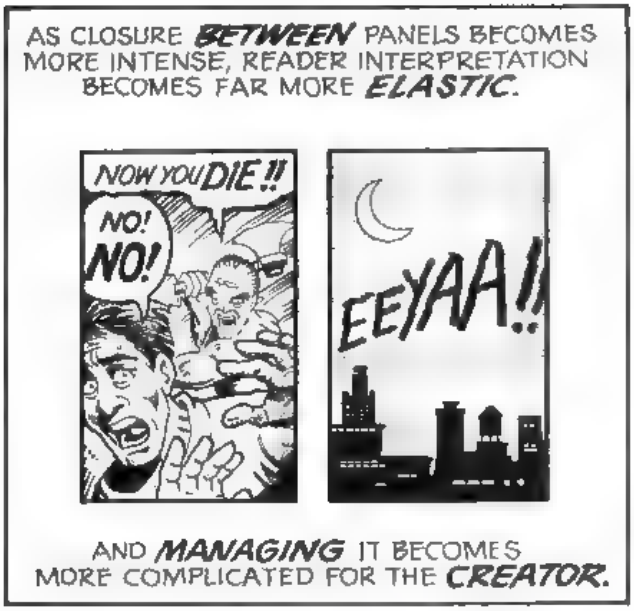

THE ART OF COMICS IS AS SUBTRACTIVE AN ART AS IT IS ADDITIVE.
PROMISE ME YOU WON'T DRINK AND DRIVE, CARL.
I PROMISE
RIP CARL
END

AND FINDING THE BALANCE BETWEEN TOO MUCH AND TOO LITTLE IS CRUCIAL TO COMICS CREATORS THE WORLD OVER

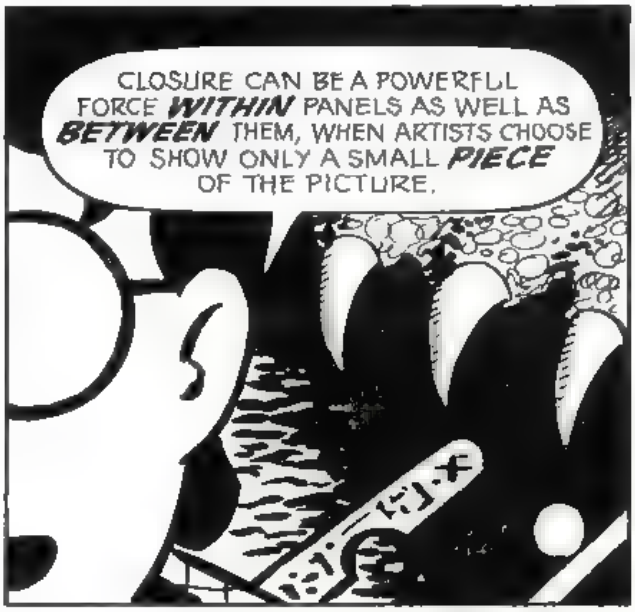

TO STRIKE THAT BALANCE, CREATORS REGULARLY MAKE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THEIR READERS' EXPERIENCES.
SOME SEEM PRETTY SAFE, LIKE THE ASSUMPTION THAT THIS WILL BE PERCEIVED BY AUDIENCES AS AN EYE CLOSING

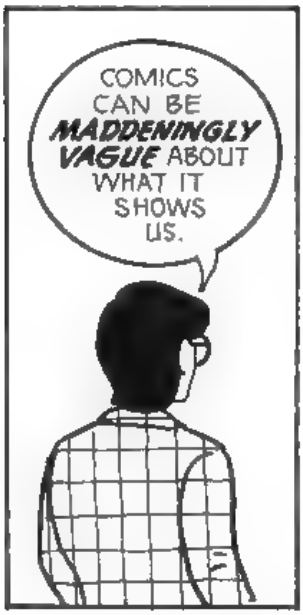
SAFE, THAT IS, IF THE AUDIENCE DOESN'T READ RIGHT TO LEFT!


WE ASSUME AS READERS THAT WE WILL KNOW WHAT ORDER TO READ PANELS IN, BUT THE BUSINESS OF ARRANGING THOSE PANELS IS ACTUALLY QUITE COMPLEX.
SO COMPLEX, IN FACT, THAT EVEN SEASONED PROS WILL SOMETIMES BLOW IT.
?
?
?


AS CLOSURE BETWEEN PANELS BECOMES MORE INTENSE, READER INTERPRETATION BECOMES FAR MORE ELASTIC.
NOW YOU DIE!!
NO! NO!
EEYAA!!
AND MANAGING IT BECOMES MORE COMPLICATED FOR THE CREATOR.

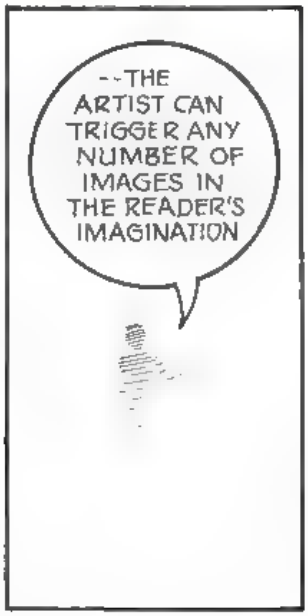
SOME ARTISTS CAN BE DELIBERATELY AMBIGUOUS, OF COURSE, AND OFFER US NO STRICT INTERPRETATION TO GO ON

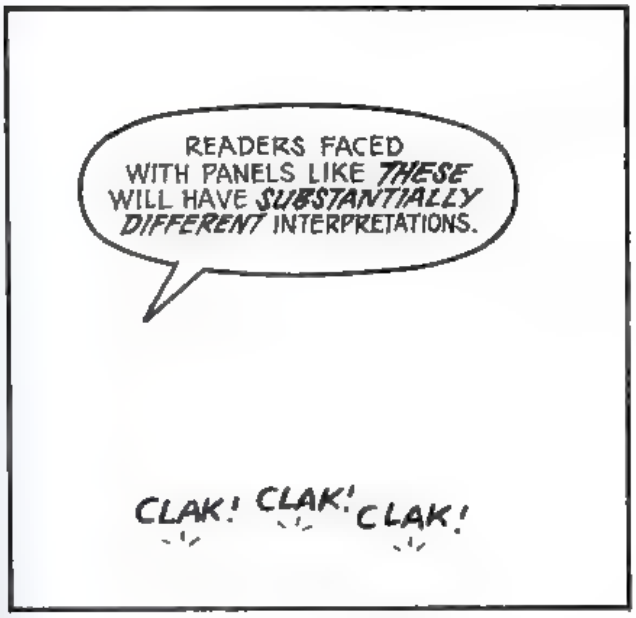

CLOSURE CAN BE A POWERFUL FORCE WITHIN PANELS AS WELL AS BETWEEN THEM, WHEN ARTISTS CHOOSE TO SHOW ONLY A SMALL PIECE OF THE PICTURE.


COMICS CAN BE MADDENINGLY VAGUE ABOUT WHAT IT SHOWS US.

BY SHOWING LITTLE OR NOTHING OF A GIVEN SCENE--

--AND OFFERING ONLY CLUES TO THE READER--


--THE ARTIST CAN TRIGGER ANY NUMBER OF IMAGES IN THE READER'S IMAGINATION


READERS FACED WITH PANELS LIKE *THESE* WILL HAVE *SUBSTANTIALLY DIFFERENT* INTERPRETATIONS.
CLAK! CLAK! CLAK!

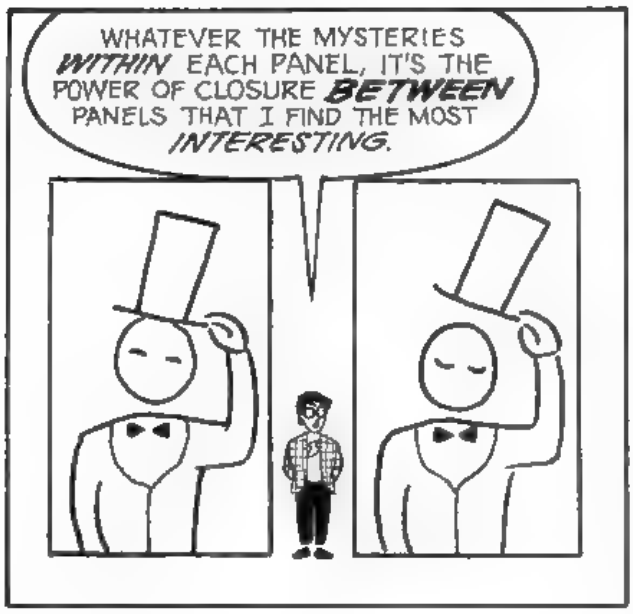
BY CONSTRUCTING *WHOLE IMAGES* BASED ON THESE *FRAGMENTS*, READERS ARE *PERFORMING CLOSURE*, JUST AS--
WHOOSH!
Splip Splip

?
Ding! Ding!
UH--JUST AS READERS COMPLETE AN ACTION OR IDEA *BETWEEN*--

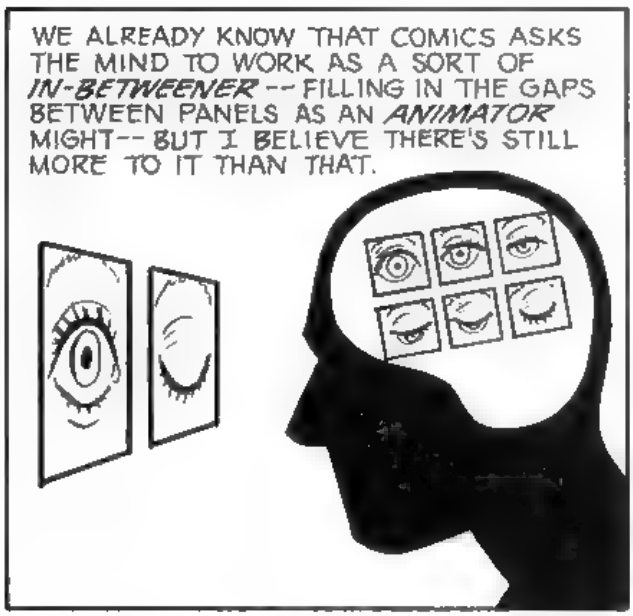
OW!
OW!
Ding! Ding!
AHEM! I SAY, JUST AS READERS COMPLETE--

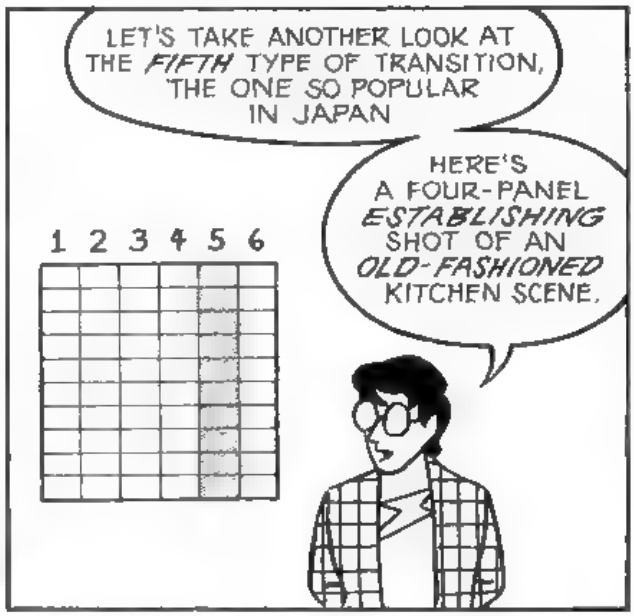
--AN ACTION OR--
OW! OW!
*STOP* THAT!
Ding! Ding!
OW!

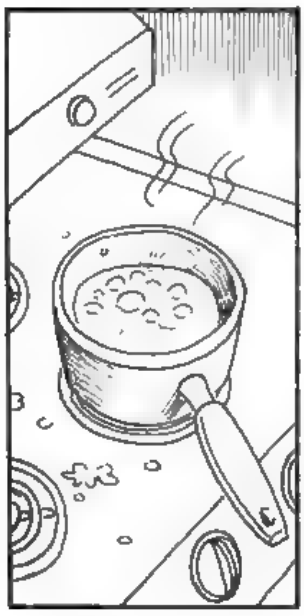
Ding! Ding!
OW!

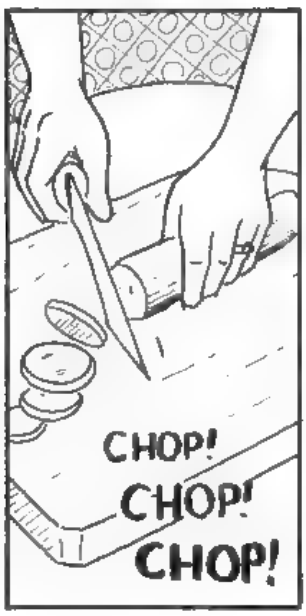

WHATEVER THE MYSTERIES *WITHIN* EACH PANEL, IT'S THE POWER OF CLOSURE ***BETWEEN*** PANELS THAT I FIND THE MOST *INTERESTING*.

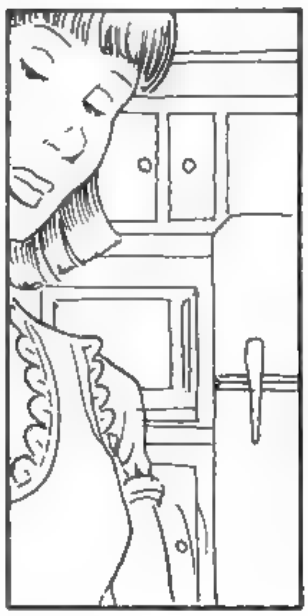
THERE'S SOMETHING *STRANGE* AND *WONDERFUL* THAT HAPPENS IN THIS *BLANK RIBBON OF PAPER*.

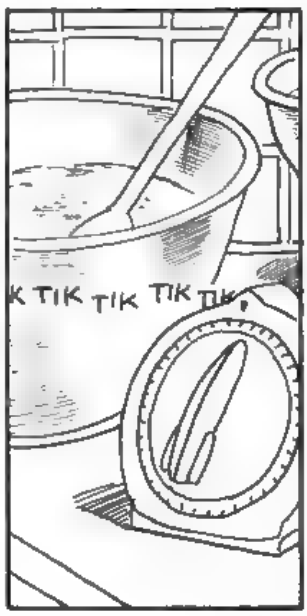

WE ALREADY KNOW THAT COMICS ASKS THE MIND TO WORK AS A SORT OF *IN-BETWEENER* -- FILLING IN THE GAPS BETWEEN PANELS AS AN *ANIMATOR* MIGHT-- BUT I BELIEVE THERE'S STILL MORE TO IT THAN THAT.


LET'S TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THE *FIFTH* TYPE OF TRANSITION, THE ONE SO POPULAR IN JAPAN
HERE'S A FOUR-PANEL *ESTABLISHING* SHOT OF AN *OLD-FASHIONED* KITCHEN SCENE.
1 2 3 4 5 6




CHOP!
CHOP!
CHOP!



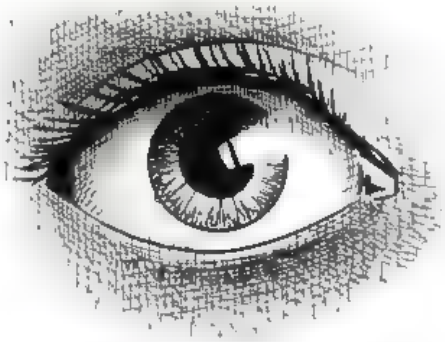

K TIK TIK TIK TIK

WITH A *HIGH DEGREE* OF *CLOSURE*, YOUR MIND IS TAKING FOUR PICTURE *FRAGMENTS* AND CONSTRUCTING AN ENTIRE SCENE *OUT OF* THOSE FRAGMENTS

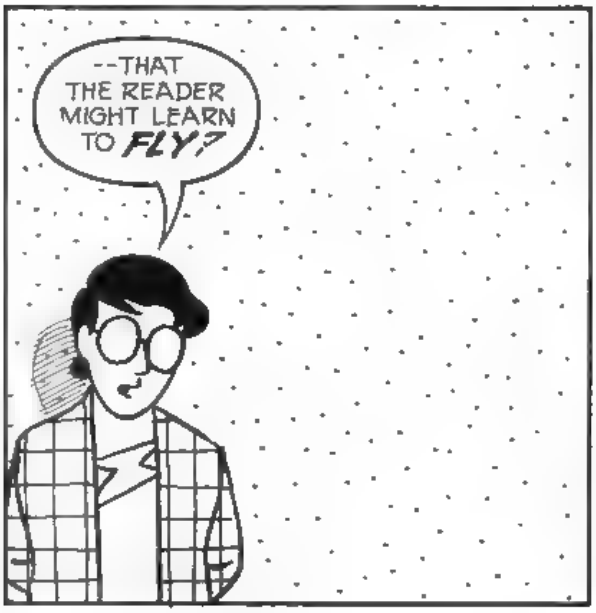
BUT THE SCENE YOUR MIND CONSTRUCTS FROM THOSE *FOUR* PANELS IS A VERY *DIFFERENT PLACE* FROM THE SCENE CONSTRUCTED FROM OUR TRADITIONAL *ONE-PANEL* ESTABLISHING SHOT!

AND WHAT ABOUT THE *CHOPPING* SOUND? DOES THAT ONLY LAST A *PANEL* OR DOES IT *PERSIST*? CAN YOU *SMELL* THIS KITCHEN? *FEEL* IT? *TASTE* IT?

COMICS IS A *MONO-SENSORY* MEDIUM. IT RELIES ON ONLY *ONE* OF THE SENSES TO CONVEY A *WORLD* OF EXPERIENCE.



BUT WHAT OF THE OTHER *FOUR*?



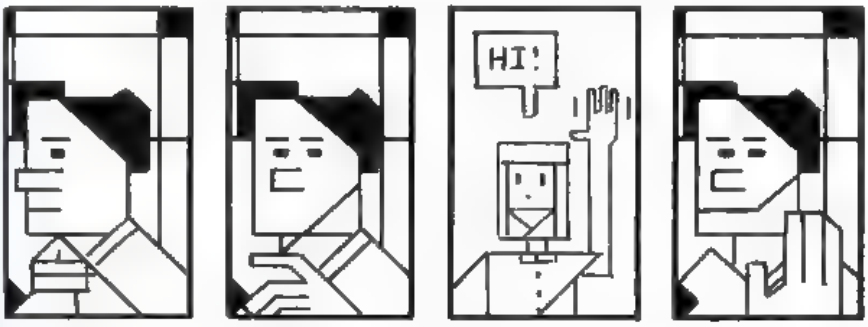
SINCE CARTOONS ALREADY EXIST AS CONCEPTS FOR THE READER, THEY TEND TO FLOW EASILY THROUGH THE CONCEPTUAL TERRITORY *BETWEEN* PANELS.

IDEAS FLOWING INTO ONE ANOTHER *SEAMLESSLY*.

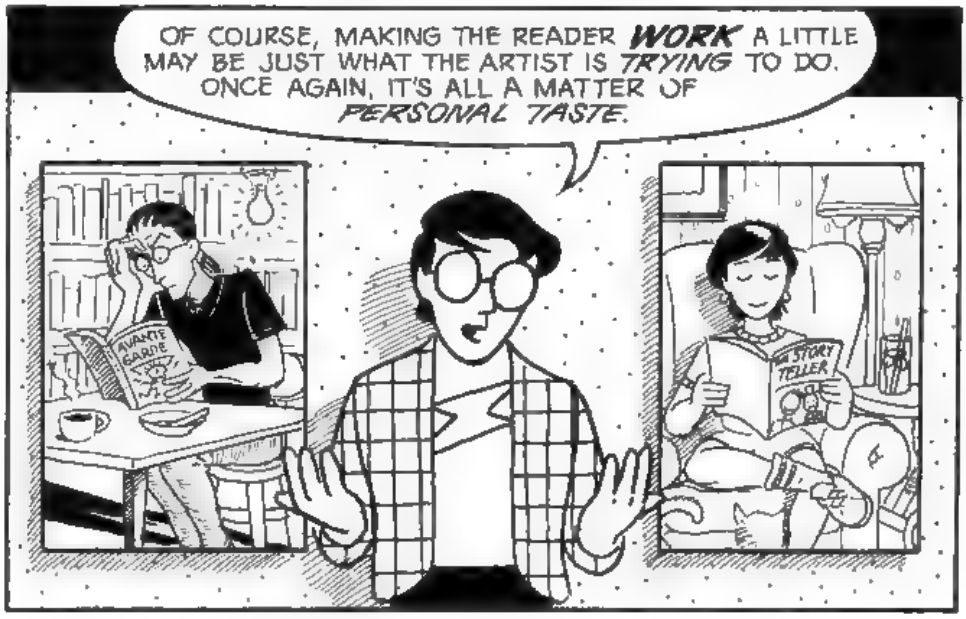
BUT *REALISTIC* IMAGES HAVE A BUMPIER RIDE. THEIRS IS A PRIMARILY *VISUAL* EXISTENCE WHICH DOESN'T PASS EASILY INTO THE REALM OF IDEAS.

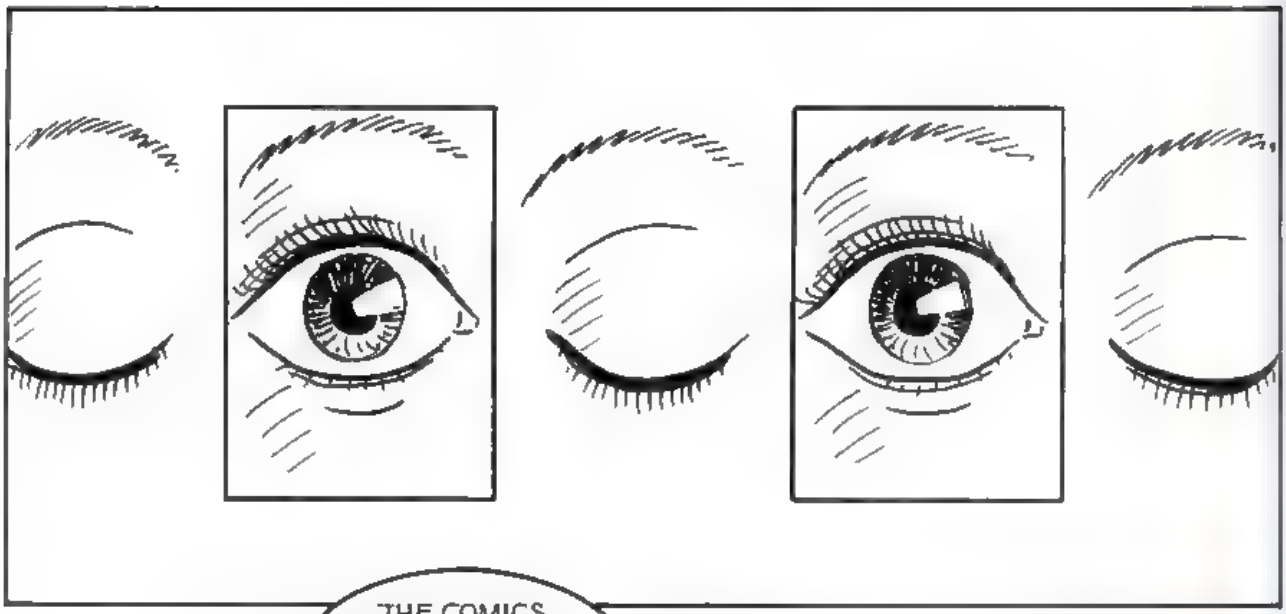
AND SO, WHAT SEEMED LIKE A CONTINUOUS SERIES OF MOMENTS IN THE LAST EXAMPLE, HERE LOOKS A LITTLE MORE LIKE A SERIES OF *STILL PICTURES*...

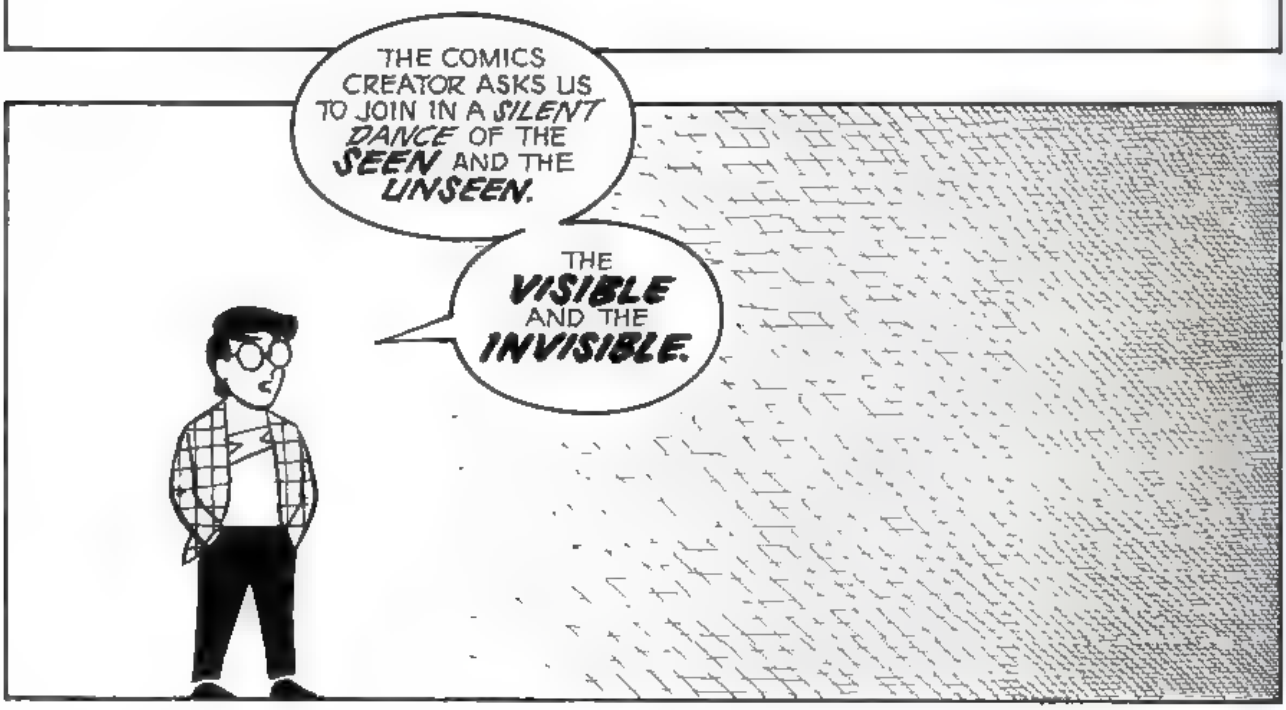
SIMILARLY, I THINK WHEN COMICS ART VEERS CLOSER TO CONCERNS OF THE ***PICTURE PLANE***, CLOSURE CAN BE MORE DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE, THOUGH FOR DIFFERENT REASONS



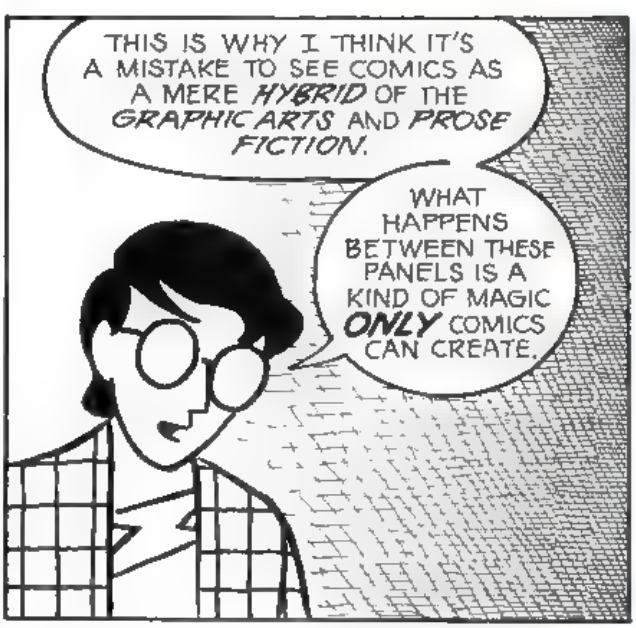

NOW IT'S THE ***UNIFYING PROPERTIES*** OF ***DESIGN*** THAT MAKE US MORE AWARE OF THE PAGE AS A ***WHOLE***, RATHER THAN ITS INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS, THE ***PANELS.***


OF COURSE, MAKING THE READER *WORK* A LITTLE MAY BE JUST WHAT THE ARTIST IS *TRYING* TO DO. ONCE AGAIN, IT'S ALL A MATTER OF *PERSONAL TASTE.*
AVANTE GARDE
STORY TELLER



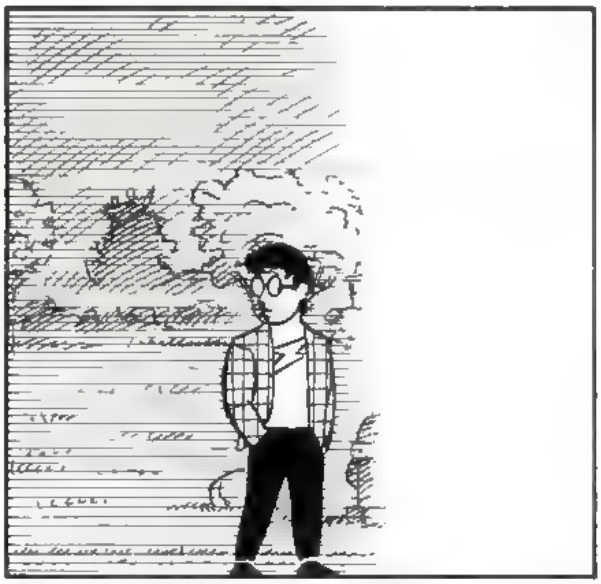

THE COMICS CREATOR ASKS US TO JOIN IN A SILENT DANCE OF THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN.
THE VISIBLE AND THE INVISIBLE.

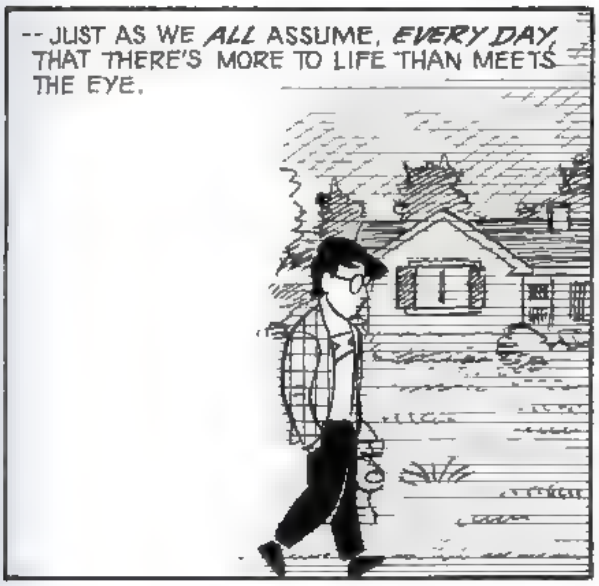
THIS DANCE IS UNIQUE TO COMICS NO OTHER ARTFORM GIVES SO MUCH TO ITS AUDIENCE WHILE ASKING SO MUCH FROM THEM AS WELL


THIS IS WHY I THINK IT'S A MISTAKE TO SEE COMICS AS A MERE HYBRID OF THE GRAPHIC ARTS AND PROSE FICTION.
WHAT HAPPENS BETWEEN THESE PANELS IS A KIND OF MAGIC ONLY COMICS CAN CREATE.

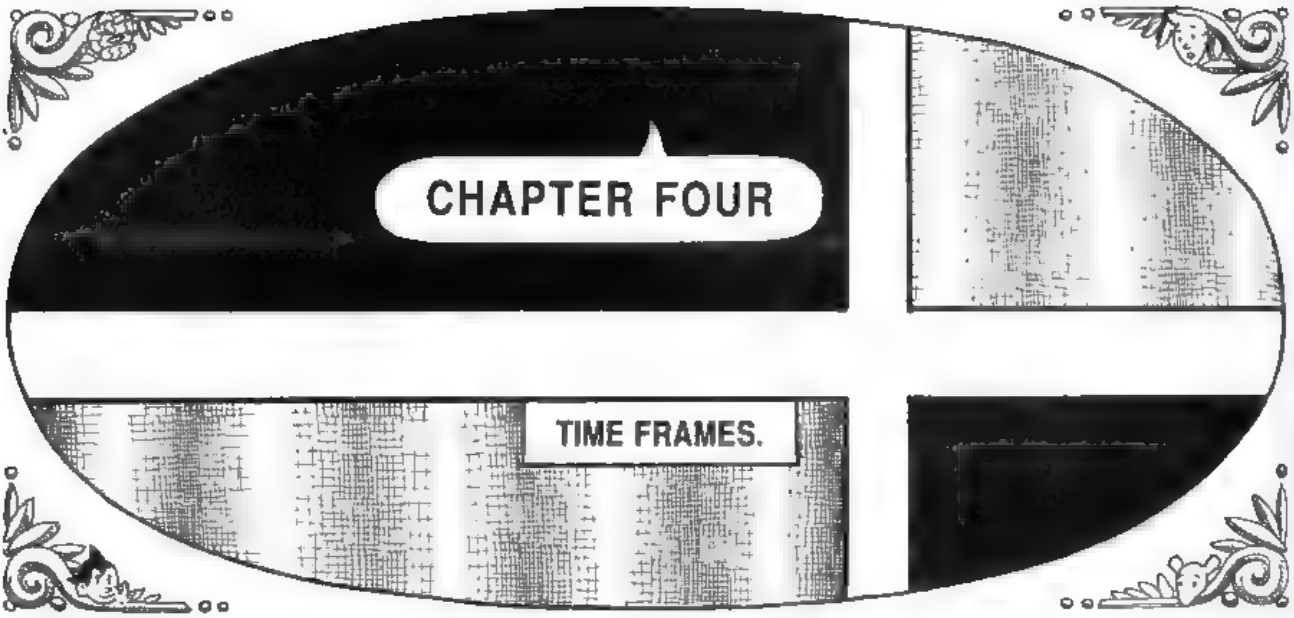
HERE IN THIS STUDIO, I'VE TRIED TO *CONTROL* THAT PROCESS AND USE IT TO MAKE MY CASE.
BUT I CAN ONLY *POINT THE WAY.* I CAN'T TAKE YOU *ANYWHERE* YOU DON'T WANT TO *GO.*

ALL I CAN DO IS MAKE *ASSUMPTIONS* ABOUT YOU AND HOPE THAT THEY'RE *CORRECT--*



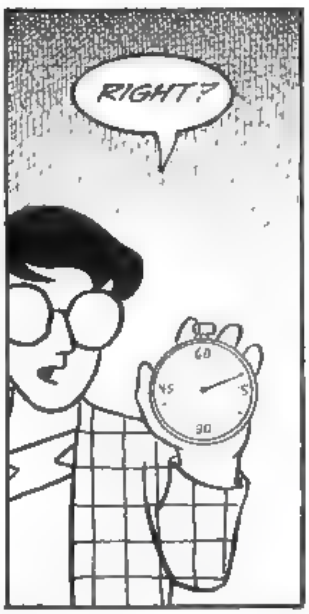

--JUST AS WE *ALL* ASSUME, *EVERY DAY,* THAT THERE'S MORE TO LIFE THAN MEETS THE EYE.

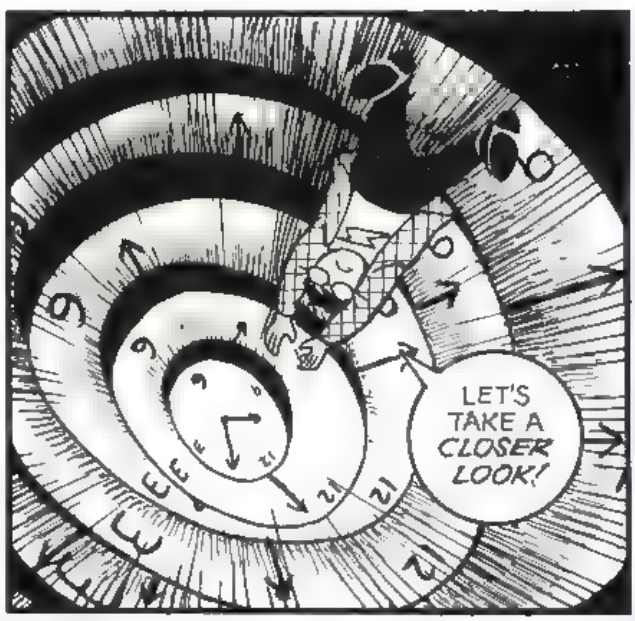
ALL I ASK OF YOU IS A LITTLE *FAITH--*
--AND A *WORLD* OF *IMAGINATION.*

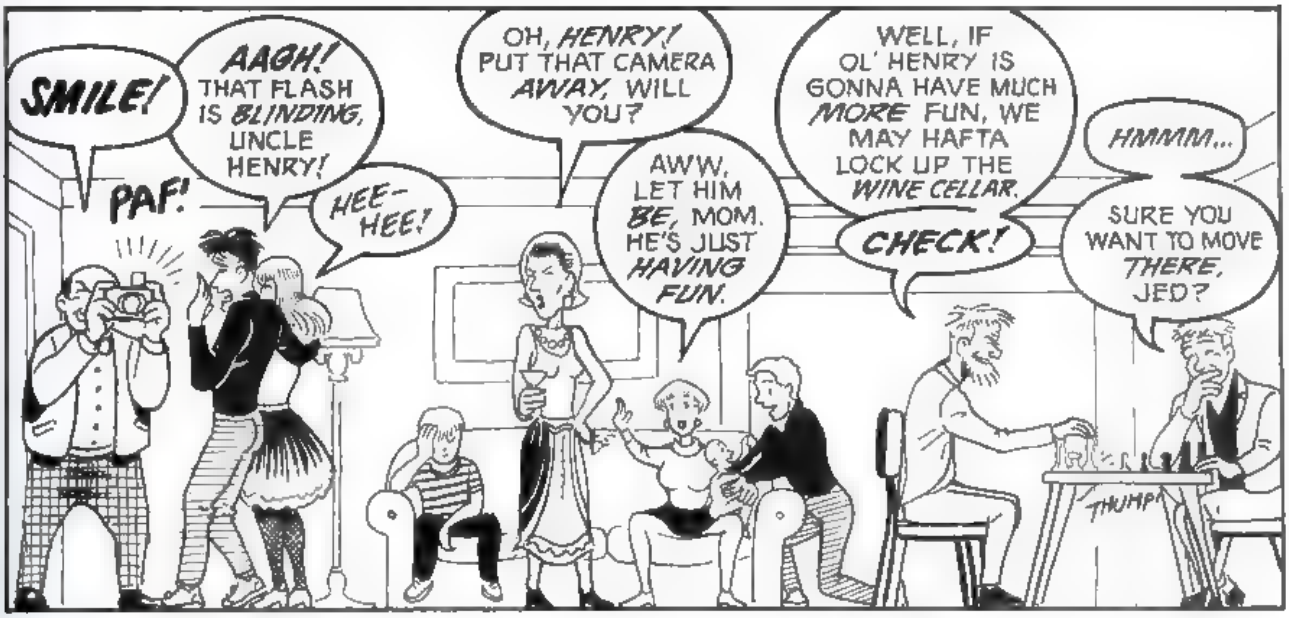


AND **BETWEEN** THOSE FROZEN MOMENTS -- BETWEEN THE PANELS -- OUR MINDS FILL IN THE *INTERVENING MOMENTS*, CREATING THE ILLUSION OF *TIME AND MOTION.*

LIKE A LINE DRAWN BETWEEN TWO POINTS





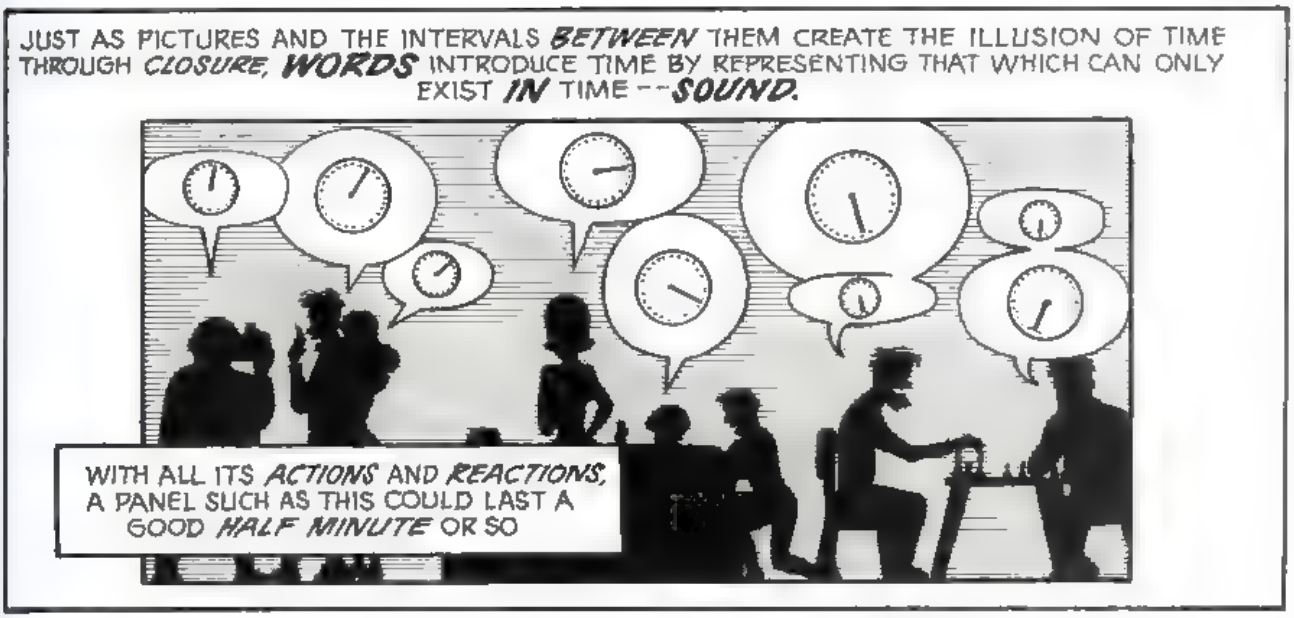

SMILE!
AAGH! THAT FLASH IS BLINDING, UNCLE HENRY!
PAF!
HEE-HEE!
OH, HENRY! PUT THAT CAMERA AWAY, WILL YOU?
AWW, LET HIM BE, MOM. HE'S JUST HAVING FUN.
WELL, IF OL' HENRY IS GONNA HAVE MUCH MORE FUN, WE MAY HAFTA LOCK UP THE WINE CELLAR.
CHECK!
HMMM...
SURE YOU WANT TO MOVE THERE, JED?
THUMP!

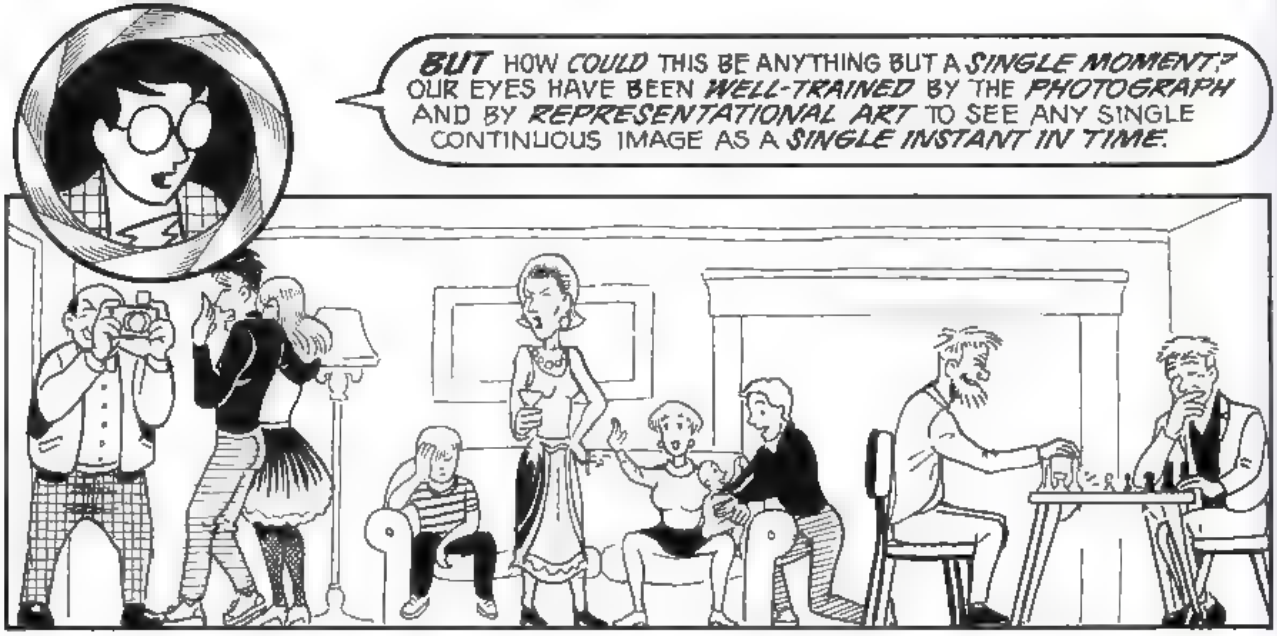
SINGLE MOMENT?
HARDLY!
WHIRRRRRR

EVEN THE BRIEF SOUND OF A FLASH-BULB HAS A CERTAIN DURATION, SHORT TO BE SURE, BUT NOT INSTANTANEOUS!
PAF!

FAR SLOWER IS THE DURATION OF THE AVERAGE WORD. UNCLE HENRY ALONE BURNS UP A GOOD SECOND IN THIS PANEL, ESPECIALLY SINCE "SMILE!" UNDOUBTEDLY PRECEDED THE FLASH
SMILE!
PAF!

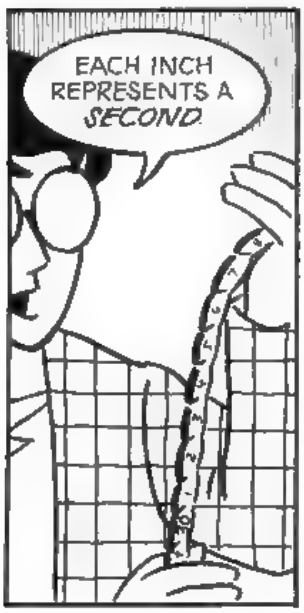
LIKEWISE, THE NEXT BALLOONS COULD HAVE ONLY FOLLOWED THE BURST OF THE FLASHBULB, THUS ADDING STILL MORE TIME
AAGH! THAT FLASH IS BLINDING, UNCLE HENRY!
HEE-HEE!


JUST AS PICTURES AND THE INTERVALS BETWEEN THEM CREATE THE ILLUSION OF TIME THROUGH CLOSURE, WORDS INTRODUCE TIME BY REPRESENTING THAT WHICH CAN ONLY EXIST IN TIME -- SOUND.
WITH ALL ITS ACTIONS AND REACTIONS, A PANEL SUCH AS THIS COULD LAST A GOOD HALF MINUTE OR SO


BUT HOW COULD THIS BE ANYTHING BUT A SINGLE MOMENT? OUR EYES HAVE BEEN WELL-TRAINED BY THE PHOTOGRAPH AND BY REPRESENTATIONAL ART TO SEE ANY SINGLE CONTINUOUS IMAGE AS A SINGLE INSTANT IN TIME.

BUT THE ACTIONS THAT WE SEE OCCURRING SEEMINGLY AT THE SAME TIME OBVIOUSLY CAN'T BE!

ANOTHER WAY TO LOOK AT IT: LET'S THINK OF TIME AS A ROPE.

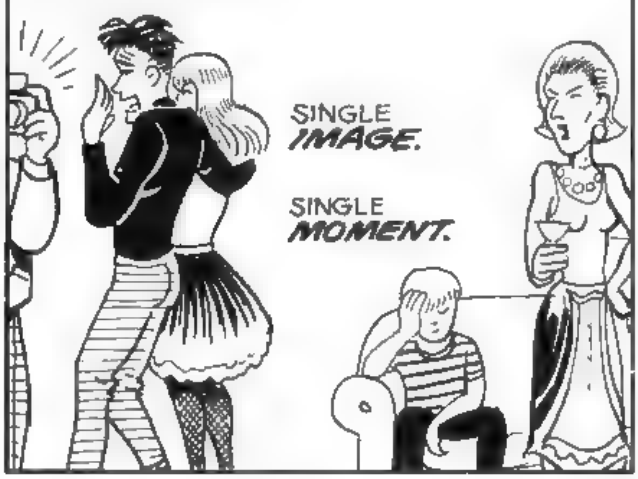

EACH INCH REPRESENTS A SECOND.

SUCH A ROPE MIGHT BE SAID TO WIND SOMETHING LIKE THIS THROUGH OUR PANEL
SIMPLIFIED OF COURSE, SINCE EACH BALLOON HAS ITS OWN TWISTS AND TURNS.

AND SINCE EACH FACE AND FIGURE IS DRAWN TO MATCH HIS/HER OWN WORDS--
SMILE!
AAGH! THAT FLASH IS BLINDING, UNCLE HENRY!
PAF!

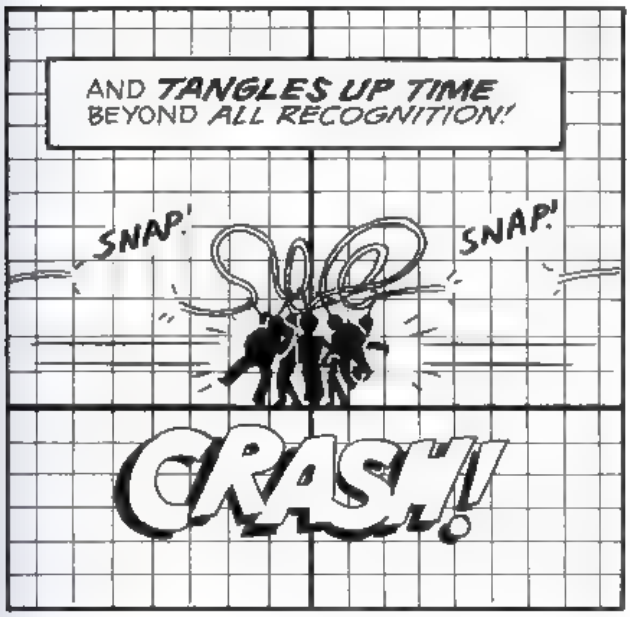
--THOSE FIGURES, FACES AND WORDS ARE MATCHED IN *TIME* AS WELL.

THE PROPERTIES OF THE SINGLE CONTINUOUS ***IMAGE***, MEANWHILE, TEND TO MATCH EACH FIGURE WITH EVERY ***OTHER*** FIGURE.

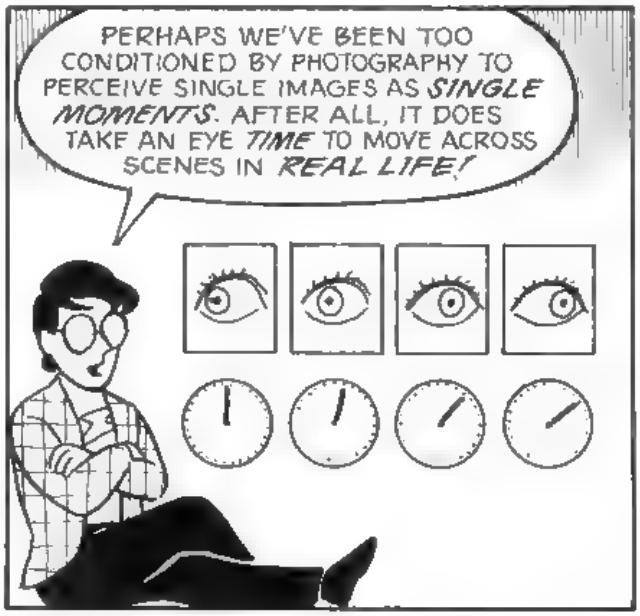



PORTRAYING TIME ON A LINE MOVING ***LEFT TO RIGHT,*** THIS PUTS ALL THE *IMAGES* ON THE SAME VERTICAL AXIS.

AND ***TANGLES UP TIME*** BEYOND *ALL RECOGNITION!*

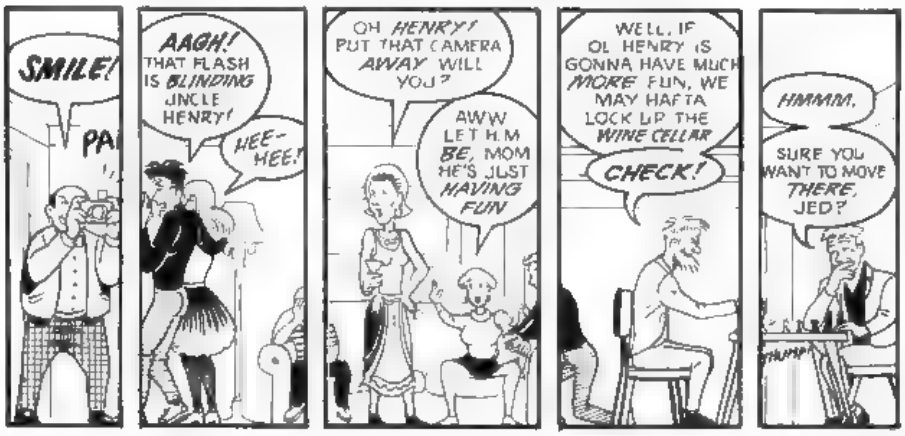



PERHAPS WE'VE BEEN TOO CONDITIONED BY PHOTOGRAPHY TO PERCEIVE SINGLE IMAGES AS ***SINGLE MOMENTS***. AFTER ALL, IT DOES TAKE AN EYE *TIME* TO MOVE ACROSS SCENES IN *REAL LIFE!*



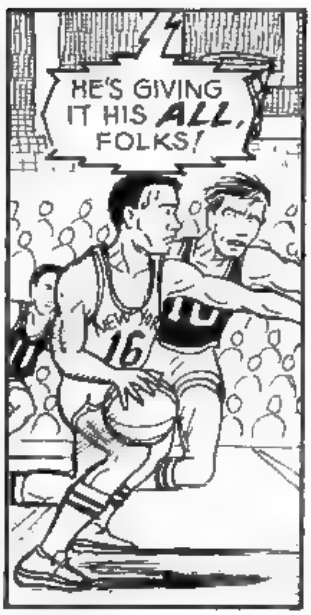
EACH FIGURE IS ARRANGED FROM ***LEFT TO RIGHT*** IN THE SEQUENCE WE WILL ***"READ"*** THEM, EACH OCCUPYING A DISTINCT *TIME SLOT.*

IN SOME RESPECTS THIS PANEL BY ITSELF ACTUALLY ***FITS*** OUR ***DEFINITION*** OF COMICS! ALL IT NEEDS IS A FEW *GUTTERS* THROWN IN TO *CLARIFY THE SEQUENCE*


SMILE!
AAGH! THAT FLASH IS *BLINDING* UNCLE HENRY!
HEE-HEE!
OH *HENRY!* PUT THAT CAMERA *AWAY* WILL YOU?
AWW LET H.M *BE*, MOM HE'S JUST *HAVING FUN*
WELL, IF OL HENRY IS GONNA HAVE MUCH *MORE* FUN, WE MAY HAFTA LOCK UP THE *WINE CELLAR*
CHECK!
HMMM.
SURE YOU WANT TO MOVE *THERE*, JED?

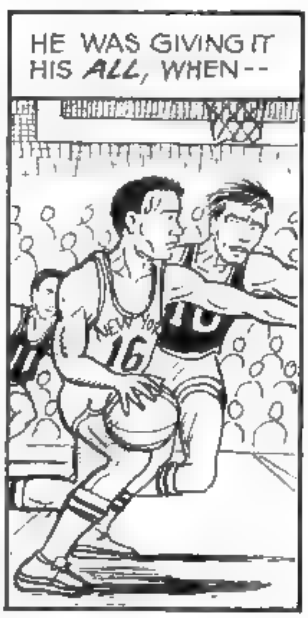
***ONE*** PANEL, OPERATING AS ***SEVERAL*** PANELS

NOT *ALL* PANELS ARE LIKE THAT, OF COURSE
A SILENT PANEL SUCH AS THIS COULD *INDEED* BE SAID TO DEPICT A *SINGLE MOMENT!*

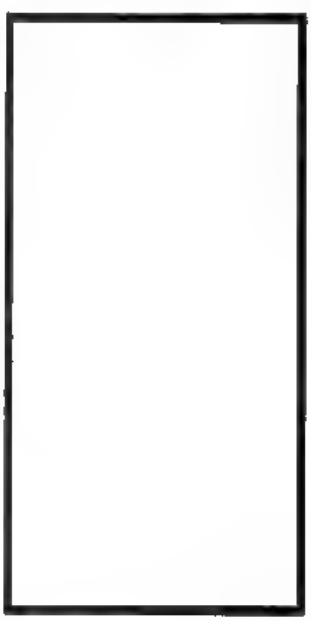

HE'S GIVING IT HIS *ALL*, FOLKS!

IF *SOUND* IS INTRODUCED, THIS CEASES TO BE TRUE--

--*BUT*, IN AN OTHERWISE SILENT *CAPTIONED* PANEL, THE SINGLE MOMENT CAN ACTUALLY BE *HELD*.


HE WAS GIVING IT HIS *ALL*, WHEN--

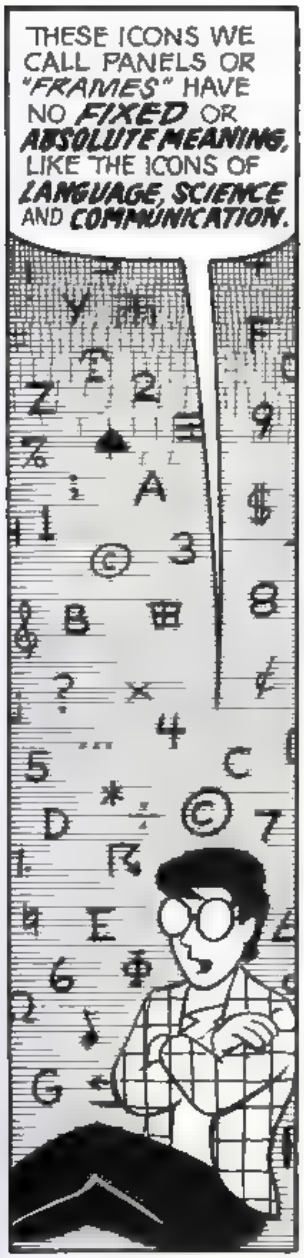
THESE VARIOUS SHAPES WE CALL *PANELS* HOLD IN THEIR BORDERS ALL OF THE ICONS THAT ADD UP TO THE *VOCABULARY OF COMICS*.

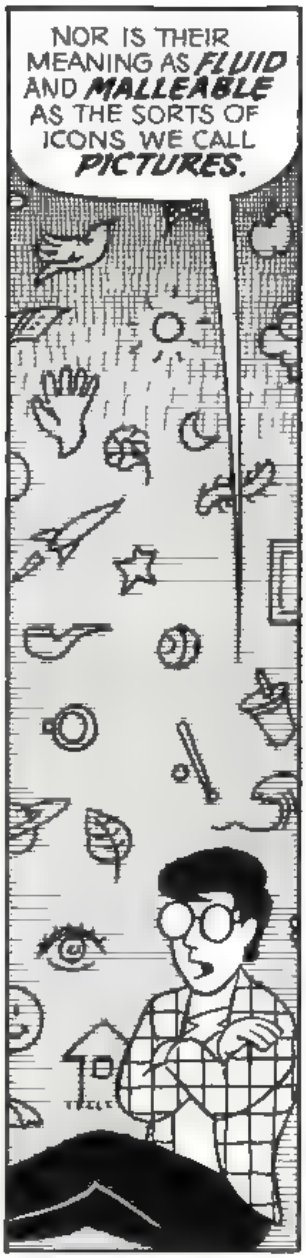


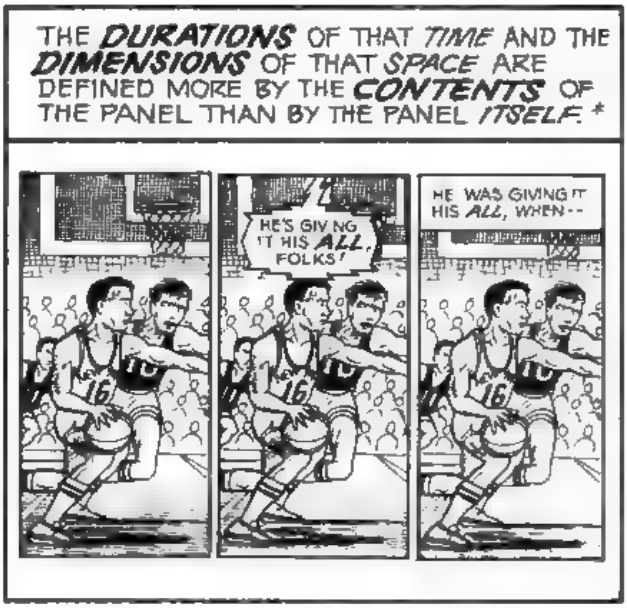
ALL EXCEPT *ONE*.

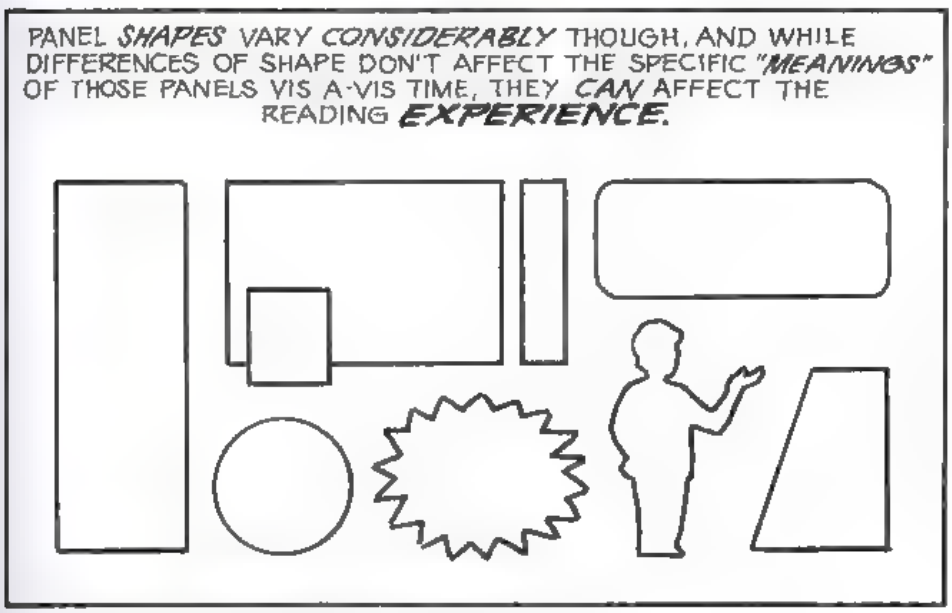
FOR JUST AS THE BODY'S LARGEST ORGAN --OUR *SKIN*-- IS SELDOM *THOUGHT OF* AS AN ORGAN--

--SO TOO IS THE PANEL *ITSELF* OVERLOOKED AS COMICS' MOST IMPORTANT *ICON!*

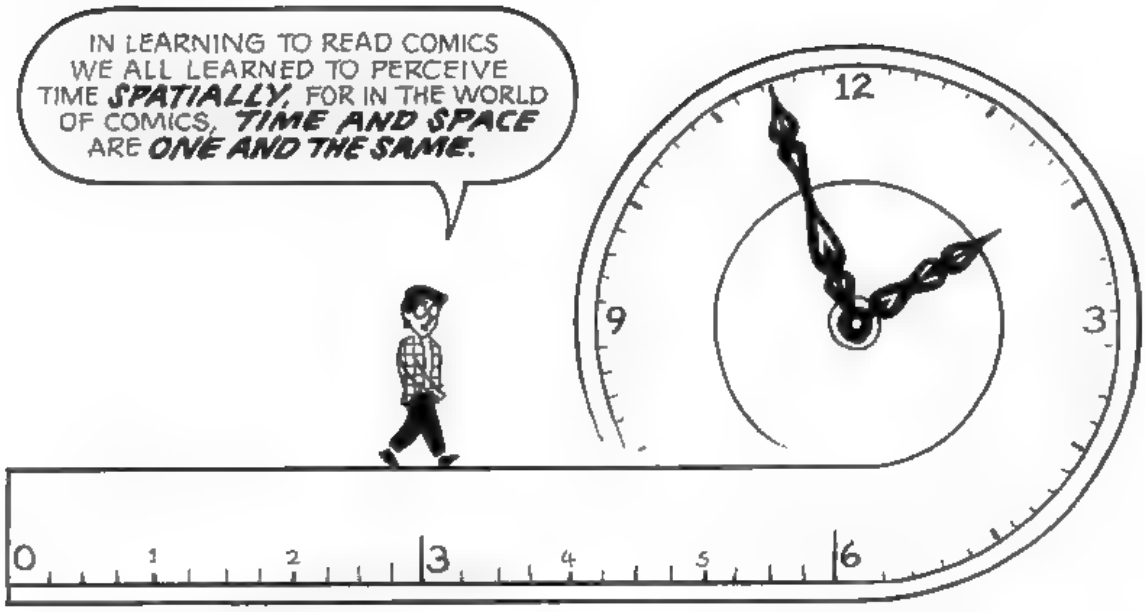

THESE ICONS WE CALL PANELS OR "FRAMES" HAVE NO FIXED OR ABSOLUTE MEANING, LIKE THE ICONS OF LANGUAGE, SCIENCE AND COMMUNICATION.



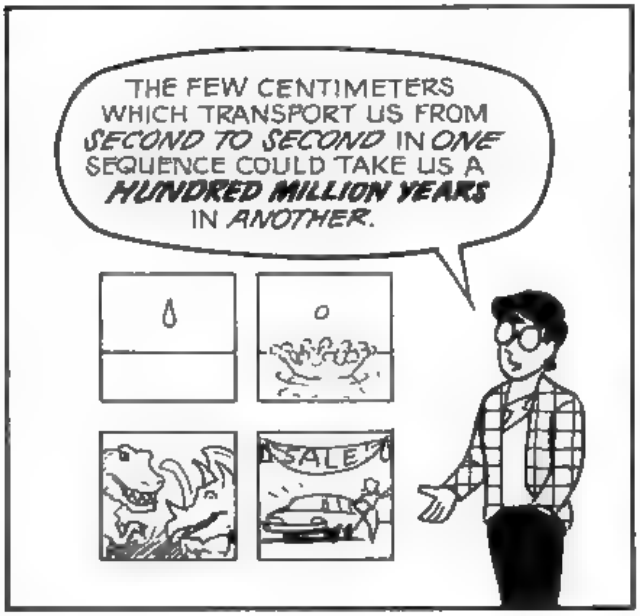

THE DURATIONS OF THAT TIME AND THE DIMENSIONS OF THAT SPACE ARE DEFINED MORE BY THE CONTENTS OF THE PANEL THAN BY THE PANEL ITSELF. *
HE'S GIVING IT HIS ALL, FOLKS!
HE WAS GIVING IT HIS ALL, WHEN--


PANEL SHAPES VARY CONSIDERABLY THOUGH, AND WHILE DIFFERENCES OF SHAPE DON'T AFFECT THE SPECIFIC "MEANINGS" OF THOSE PANELS VIS A-VIS TIME, THEY CAN AFFECT THE READING EXPERIENCE.

*EISNER DISCUSSES THIS UNDER THE HEADING "FRAMING TIME" IN COMICS AND SEQUENTIAL ART


IN LEARNING TO READ COMICS WE ALL LEARNED TO PERCEIVE TIME SPATIALLY, FOR IN THE WORLD OF COMICS, TIME AND SPACE ARE ONE AND THE SAME.
12
9
3
0
1
2
3
4
5
6

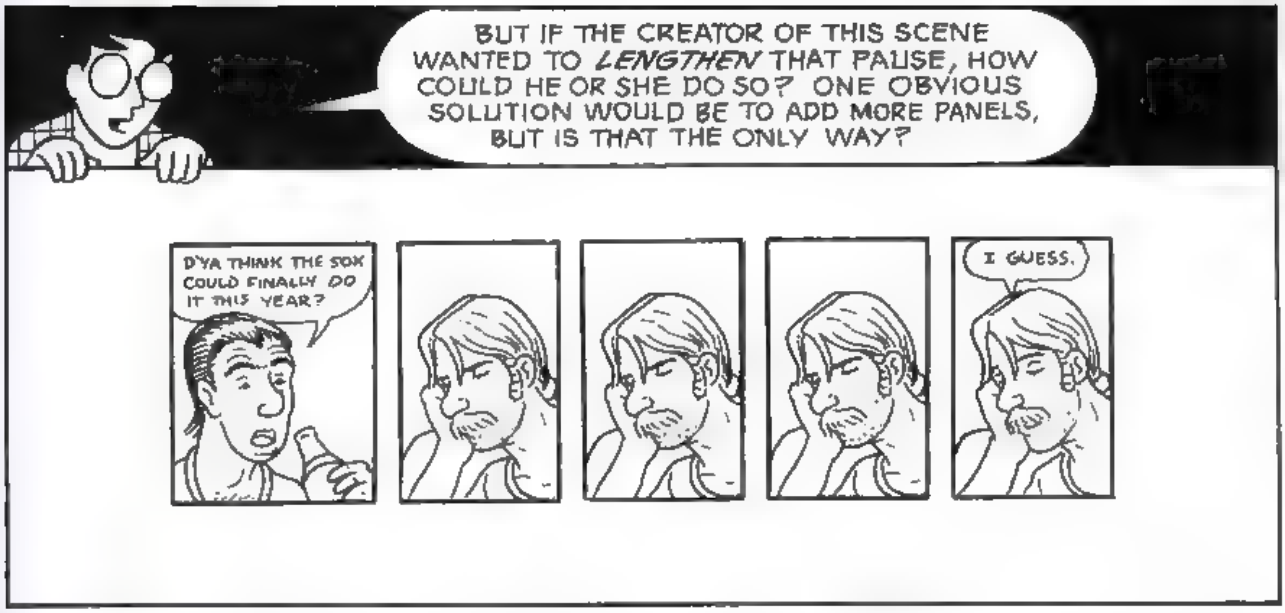
THE PROBLEM IS THERE'S NO CONVERSION CHART!


THE FEW CENTIMETERS WHICH TRANSPORT US FROM SECOND TO SECOND IN ONE SEQUENCE COULD TAKE US A HUNDRED MILLION YEARS IN ANOTHER.
SALE

SO, AS READERS, WE'RE LEFT WITH ONLY A VAGUE SENSE THAT AS OUR EYES ARE MOVING THROUGH SPACE, THEY'RE ALSO MOVING THROUGH TIME--WE JUST DON'T KNOW BY HOW MUCH!

IN MOST CASES IT'S NOT HARD TO MAKE AN EDUCATED GUESS AS TO THE DURATION OF A GIVEN SEQUENCE, SO LONG AS THE ELEMENTS OF THAT SEQUENCE ARE FAMILIAR TO US.
I ALWAYS FIGURED MARY-ANNE WOULD GO FOR GILLIGAN
I GUESS

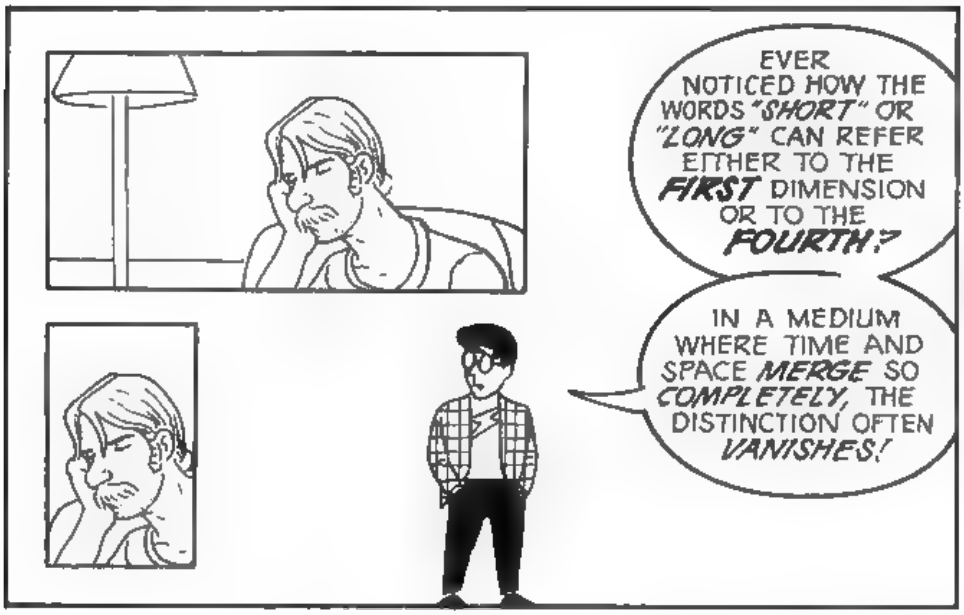
FROM A LIFETIME OF CONVERSATIONS, WE CAN BE SURE THAT A "PAUSE" PANEL LIKE THIS LASTS FOR NO MORE THAN SEVERAL SECONDS.


BUT IF THE CREATOR OF THIS SCENE WANTED TO *LENGTHEN* THAT PAUSE, HOW COULD HE OR SHE DO SO? ONE OBVIOUS SOLUTION WOULD BE TO ADD MORE PANELS, BUT IS THAT THE ONLY WAY?
D'YA THINK THE SOX COULD FINALLY DO IT THIS YEAR?
I GUESS.

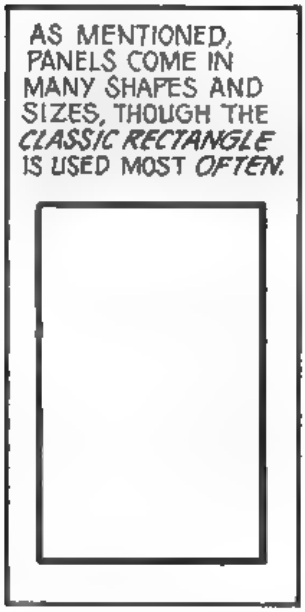
IS THERE ANY WAY TO MAKE A SINGLE SILENT PANEL LIKE THIS ONE SEEM *LONGER*? HOW ABOUT WIDENING THE SPACE *BETWEEN PANELS*? ANY *DIFFERENCE*?
HEY, I *DESERVE* A BETTER JOB! I COULD BE A *BRAIN SURGEON!*
I GUESS

WE'VE SEEN HOW TIME CAN BE CONTROLLED THROUGH THE *CONTENT* OF PANELS, THE *NUMBER* OF PANELS AND CLOSURE *BETWEEN* PANELS, BUT THERE'S STILL *ONE MORE*

AS UNLIKELY AS IT SOUNDS, THE PANEL *SHAPE* CAN ACTUALLY MAKE A *DIFFERENCE* IN OUR *PERCEPTION* OF TIME. EVEN THOUGH THIS LONG PANEL HAS THE SAME BASIC "MEANING" AS ITS SHORTER VERSIONS, STILL IT HAS THE *FEELING* OF GREATER LENGTH!
THAT *MADONNA*, MAN, SHE'S ONE *HOT* BABE!
I GUESS

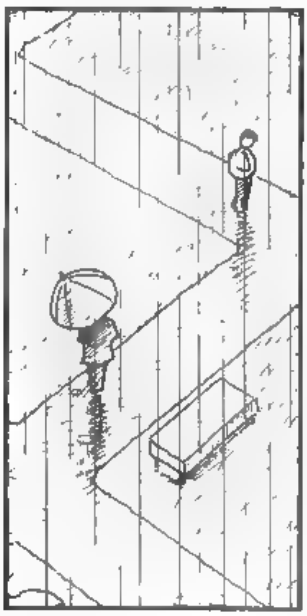

EVER NOTICED HOW THE WORDS "SHORT" OR "LONG" CAN REFER EITHER TO THE FIRST DIMENSION OR TO THE FOURTH?
IN A MEDIUM WHERE TIME AND SPACE MERGE SO COMPLETELY, THE DISTINCTION OFTEN VANISHES!

THE PANEL BORDER IS OUR GUIDE THROUGH TIME AND SPACE, BUT IT WILL ONLY GUIDE US SO FAR.


AS MENTIONED, PANELS COME IN MANY SHAPES AND SIZES, THOUGH THE CLASSIC RECTANGLE IS USED MOST OFTEN.

MOST OF US ARE SO USED TO THE STANDARD RECTANGULAR FORMAT THAT A "BORDERLESS" PANEL SUCH AS THIS CAN TAKE ON A TIMELESS QUALITY.
HEY, ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING TO ME?!
I GUESS

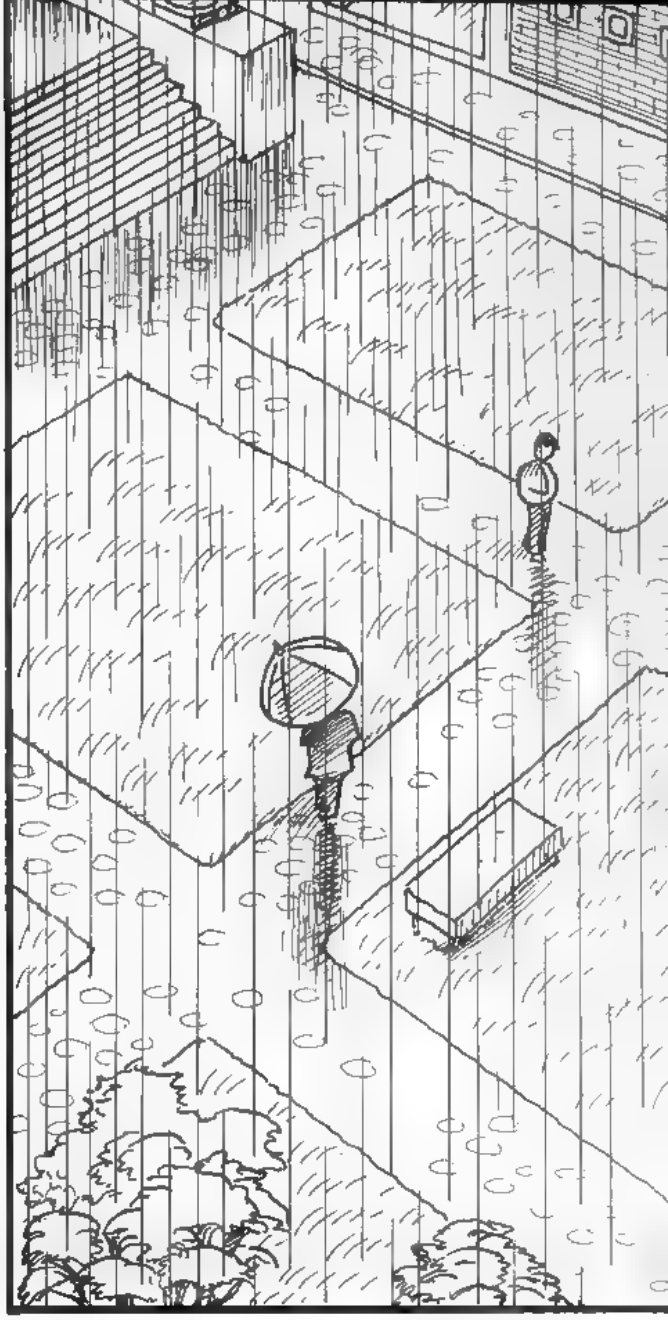
WHEN THE CONTENT OF A SILENT PANEL OFFERS NO CLUES AS TO ITS DURATION, IT CAN ALSO PRODUCE A SENSE OF TIMELESSNESS.

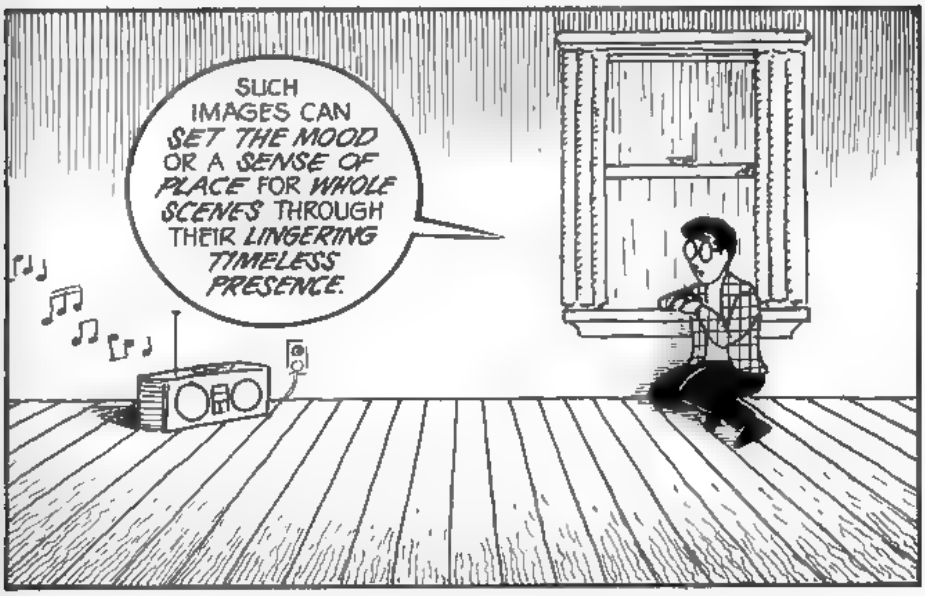


BECAUSE OF ITS UNRESOLVED NATURE, SUCH A PANEL MAY LINGER IN THE READER'S MIND

AND ITS PRESENCE MAY BE FELT IN THE PANELS WHICH FOLLOW IT.

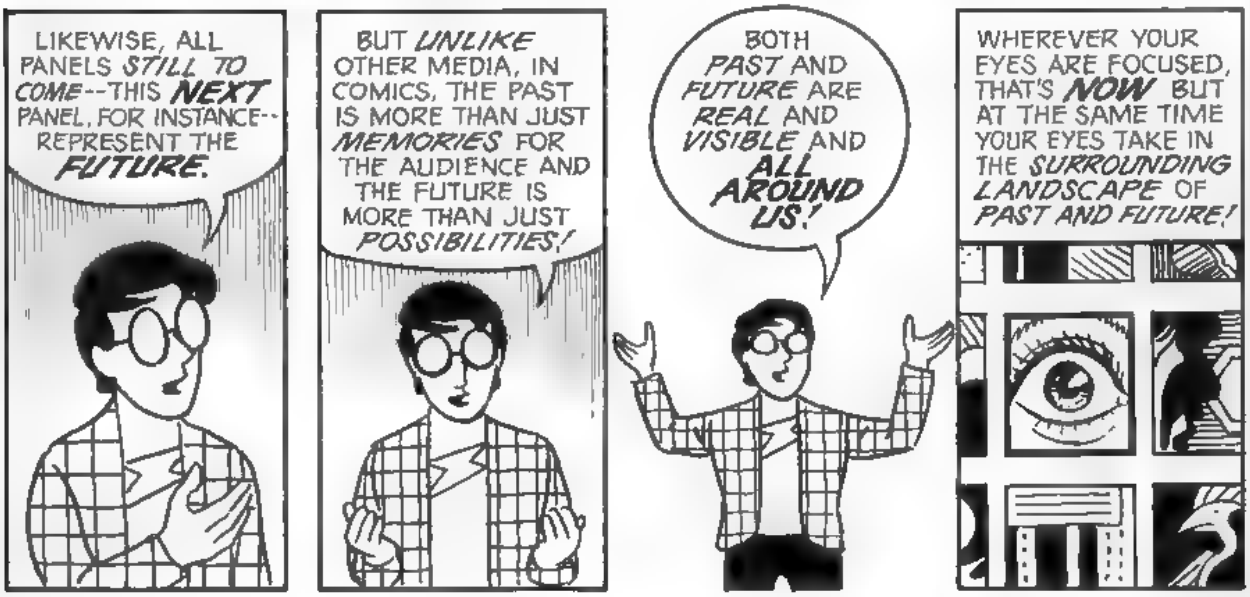
WHEN "BLEEDS" ARE USED -- I.E., WHEN A PANEL RUNS OFF THE EDGE OF THE PAGE -- THIS EFFECT IS COMPOUNDED.
TIME IS NO LONGER CONTAINED BY THE FAMILIAR ICON OF THE CLOSED PANEL, BUT INSTEAD HEMORRHAGES AND ESCAPES INTO TIMELESS SPACE.

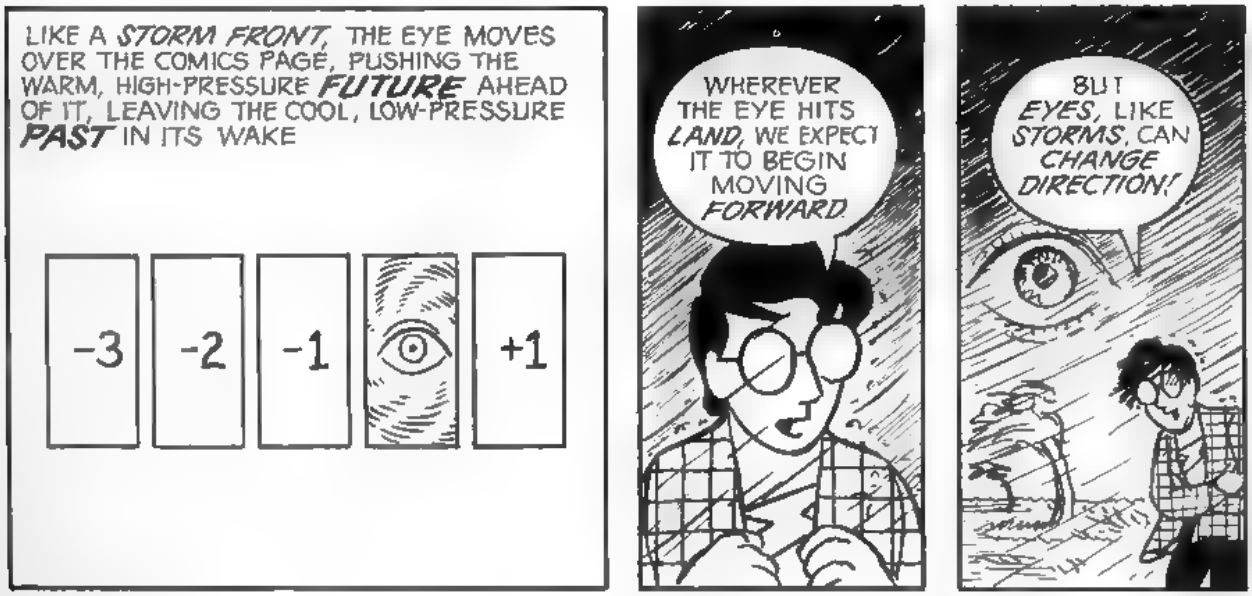



SUCH IMAGES CAN SET THE MOOD OR A SENSE OF PLACE FOR WHOLE SCENES THROUGH THEIR LINGERING TIMELESS PRESENCE.

ONCE AGAIN, THIS IS A TECHNIQUE USED MOST OFTEN IN JAPAN AND ONLY RECENTLY ADOPTED HERE IN THE WEST.

IN COMICS, AS IN *FILM*, *TELEVISION* AND *"REAL LIFE,"* IT IS ALWAYS ***NOW.***
***THIS*** PANEL AND *THIS* PANEL ***ALONE*** REPRESENTS THE ***PRESENT.***
ANY PANEL ***BEFORE*** THIS--THAT ***LAST*** ONE, FOR INSTANCE--REPRESENTS THE ***PAST.***


LIKEWISE, ALL PANELS *STILL TO COME*--THIS ***NEXT*** PANEL, FOR INSTANCE--REPRESENT THE ***FUTURE.***
BUT *UNLIKE* OTHER MEDIA, IN COMICS, THE PAST IS MORE THAN JUST *MEMORIES* FOR THE AUDIENCE AND THE FUTURE IS MORE THAN JUST *POSSIBILITIES!*
BOTH *PAST* AND *FUTURE* ARE *REAL* AND *VISIBLE* AND ***ALL AROUND US!***
WHEREVER YOUR EYES ARE FOCUSED, THAT'S ***NOW*** BUT AT THE SAME TIME YOUR EYES TAKE IN THE *SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE* OF *PAST AND FUTURE!*


LIKE A *STORM FRONT*, THE EYE MOVES OVER THE COMICS PAGE, PUSHING THE WARM, HIGH-PRESSURE ***FUTURE*** AHEAD OF IT, LEAVING THE COOL, LOW-PRESSURE ***PAST*** IN ITS WAKE
-3
-2
-1
+1
WHEREVER THE EYE HITS *LAND*, WE EXPECT IT TO BEGIN MOVING *FORWARD.*
BUT *EYES*, LIKE *STORMS*, CAN *CHANGE DIRECTION!*

ONE BEER WON'T HURT
GLUG! GLUG! GLUG!
CRASH!
RIP CARL
END

YET WE SELDOM DO CHANGE DIRECTION, EXCEPT TO RE-READ OR REVIEW PASSAGES. IT'S LEFT-TO-RIGHT, UP-TO-DOWN, PAGE AFTER PAGE.

HMM

THE IDEA THAT THE READER MIGHT CHOOSE A DIRECTION IS STILL CONSIDERED EXOTIC.

I WANT TO RENT A VIDEO.
SORRY, ALL OUR VIDEOS ARE IN BORNEO

NAH, I BETTER NOT

I'LL JUST GO HOME NOW

HI, MOM, I'M HOME!

IT'S A NOTE!
Dear Carl, I've gone to Borneo -Mom

BORNEO?!

I'LL JUST DRIVE AROUND A WHILE

OH MY GOD! I'M IN THE WRONG HOUSE!

JUST KIDDING WHAT CAN I GET YOU?

HMM.. A FORK TO THE RIGHT IS THE VIDEO STORE.

VIDEO

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!

GOSH, I JUST WANTED TO RENT ANOTHER VIDEO
O.K

DO YOU HAVE CARNIVAL OF SOULS?

NAAH! I'LL GO LEFT.

OH, HI, MR. GORDON!
CARL?

NO

THIS MAY, IN PART, BE THE INFLUENCE OF OTHER MEDIA LIKE FILM AND TELEVISION WHERE VIEWER CHOICE HAS NOT GENERALLY BEEN FEASIBLE

CONDITIONED AS WE ARE TO READ LEFT-TO-RIGHT AND UP-TO-DOWN, A MISCHIEVOUS CARTOONIST CAN PLAY ANY NUMBER OF TRICKS ON US.
THE INCREDIBLE MR. SPOT
©1992 Matt Feazell
THE END OF THE MONTH...
BROKE AGAIN!
I'LL JUST BORROW SOME MONEY FROM MYSELF IN THE FUTURE!
NOW I CAN GO OUT TO DINNER!
EAT
MY COMPLIMENTS TO THE CHEF, AND PLEASE THE CHECK, PLEASE
OUI, M'SIEU
HEY!

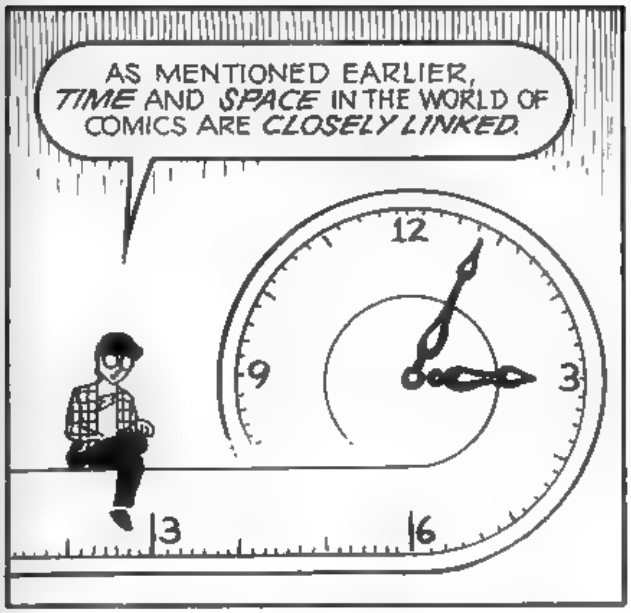
COMICS READERS ARE ALSO CONDITIONED BY OTHER MEDIA AND THE *"REAL TIME"* OF EVERYDAY LIFE TO EXPECT A VERY *LINEAR PROGRESSION.* JUST A *STRAIGHT LINE* FROM *POINT A* TO *POINT B.* BUT IS THAT *NECESSARY?*
?
WAAH!
SLAP!
KICK
1492!
GRR!
BOOM!
BLAM!

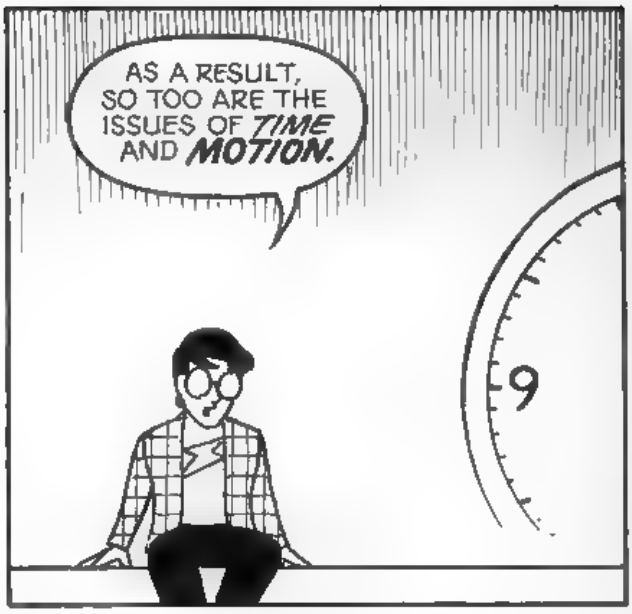
FOR *NOW,* THESE QUESTIONS ARE THE TERRITORY OF *GAMES* AND *STRANGE LITTLE EXPERIMENTS*

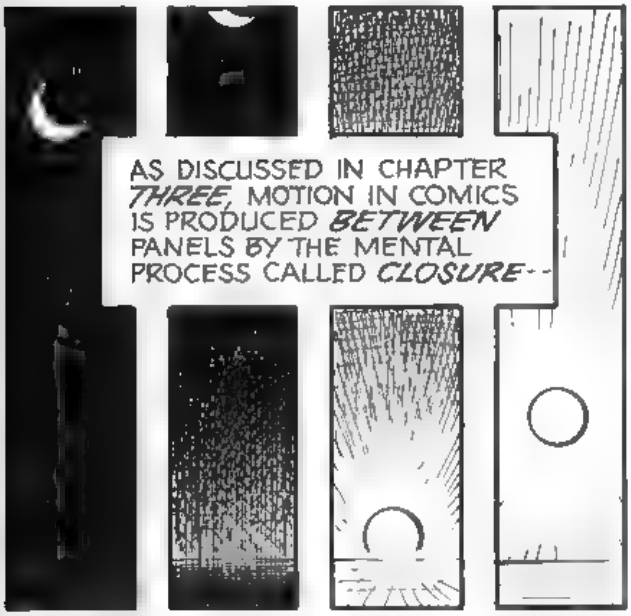
BUT *VIEWER PARTICIPATION* IS ON THE VERGE OF BECOMING AN *ENORMOUS ISSUE* IN *OTHER MEDIA.*

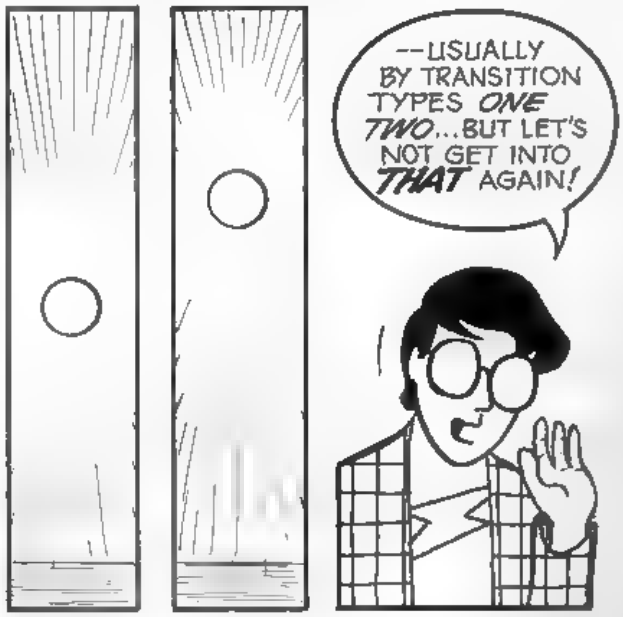
HOW COMICS *ADDRESSES* THIS ISSUE--OR *FAILS* TO--COULD PLAY A CRUCIAL PART IN *DEFINING* THE ROLE OF COMICS IN THE *NEW CENTURY.*

TIME WILL TELL
1970
1980
2000


AS MENTIONED EARLIER, *TIME* AND *SPACE* IN THE WORLD OF COMICS ARE *CLOSELY LINKED.*
12
9
3
3
6

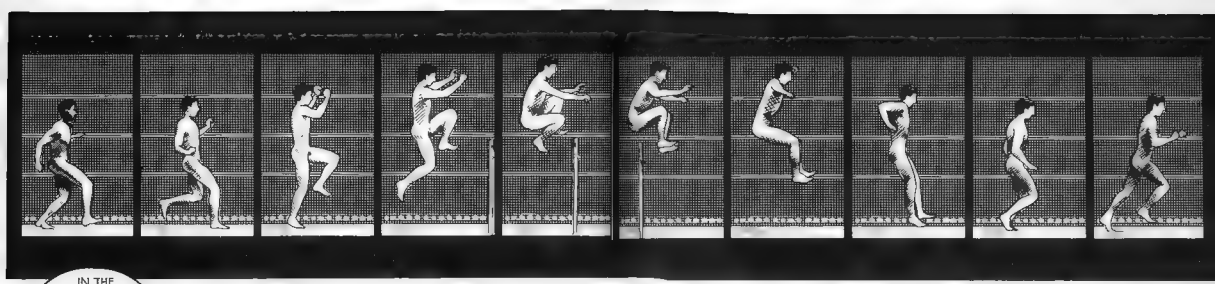

AS A RESULT, SO TOO ARE THE ISSUES OF *TIME* AND ***MOTION.***
9


AS DISCUSSED IN CHAPTER *THREE,* MOTION IN COMICS IS PRODUCED *BETWEEN* PANELS BY THE MENTAL PROCESS CALLED *CLOSURE*--


--USUALLY BY TRANSITION TYPES *ONE TWO*...BUT LET'S NOT GET INTO ***THAT*** AGAIN!

DESPITE COMICS' *THREE THOUSAND YEAR HISTORY,* IT WASN'T UNTIL TÖPFFER'S *MID-1800's DOODLINGS* THAT *SPECIFIC* MOTIONS WERE PORTRAYED IN COMICS IN THE NOW-FAMILIAR *PANEL-TO-PANEL* FORM.
HON, IN BRIGHT AND WITTY SOCIETY, ONE SHOULD BE SEATED IN ORDER TO TALK THEATRES, CASINOS, AND THE LATEST NON-SENSE IN GENERAL.
NOW, IF A SUPERIOR MAKES A JOKE, ONE JUMPS UP WITH A ROAR OF LAUGHTER

WITHIN A FEW YEARS, HOWEVER, MOTION WAS A ***HOT TOPIC*** *INDEED!*



COPIED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY EADWEARD MUYBRIDGE

IN THE LAST QUARTER OF THE *NINETEENTH CENTURY* IT SEEMED LIKE *EVERYONE* WAS TRYING TO CAPTURE MOTION THROUGH *SCIENCE!*

BY *1880*, INVENTORS THE *WORLD OVER* KNEW THAT *"MOVING PICTURES"* WERE JUST AROUND THE CORNER. *EVERYONE* WANTED TO BE *FIRST!*

MY *STROBOSCOPE* IS *SUPERIOR IN EVERY WAY* TO THE OBSOLETE *ZOETROPE!*

*BAH!* MY *PRAXINOSCOPE* IS BETTER!

*FOOLS!* MY *KINEMATOSCOPE* WILL SHOW YOU!

*HA! CHILD'S PLAY!* THEY ARE BUT *MERE TOYS* NEXT TO THE AWESOME *PHANTASMATROPE!*

FRAUDS *ALL!* MY *ZOÖPRAXINOSCOPE* WILL--!

EVENTUALLY *THOMAS EDISON*, THAT OLD SCALLYWAG, FILED THE FIRST *PATENT* ON A PROCESS USING STRIPS OF *CLEAR PLASTIC* PHOTOS AND *FILM* WAS *OFF AND RUNNING!*

IF YOU'RE GOING TO PAINT A WORLD--

--FILLED WITH MOTION--

--THEN BE PREPARED TO *PAINT MOTION!*

DUCHAMP, MORE CONCERNED WITH THE *IDEA* OF MOTION THAN THE *SENSATION*, WOULD EVENTUALLY REDUCE SUCH CONCEPTS AS MOTION TO A *SINGLE LINE.*

AS THE *MOVING PICTURE* BEGAN ITS SPECTACULAR RISE, A FEW OF THE MORE RADICAL *PAINTERS* OF THE DAY EXPLORED THE IDEA THAT MOTION COULD BE DEPICTED BY A *SINGLE* IMAGE ON *CANVAS.*

*THE FUTURISTS* IN ITALY AND *MARCEL DUCHAMP* IN FRANCE BEGAN THE *SYSTEMATIC DECOMPOSITION OF MOVING IMAGES* IN A *STATIC MEDIUM.*

Girl Running on a Balcony by Balla

Nude Descending a Staircase #2 by Duchamp

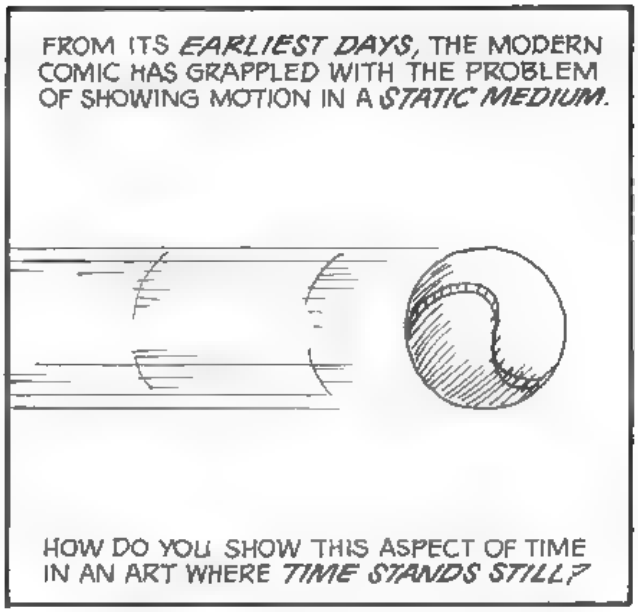
IT WASN'T A BAD IDEA!

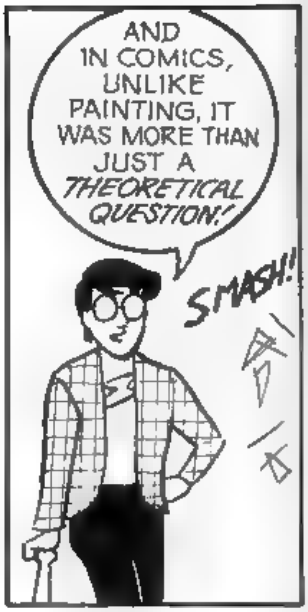
DUCHAMP SOON MOVED ON, THE FUTURISTS *DISBANDED* AND FINE ARTISTS GENERALLY *LOST INTEREST* IN THIS *OTHER* TYPE OF *"MOVING PICTURE"*

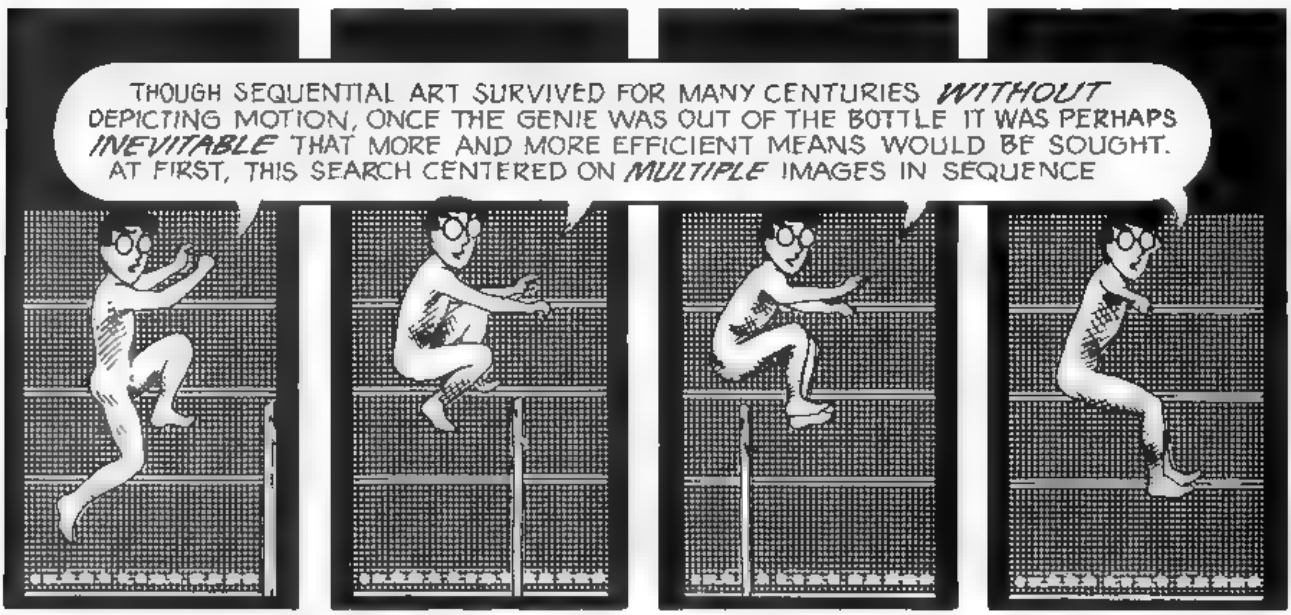
BUT THROUGHOUT THIS SAME PERIOD *ANOTHER* MEDIUM, LESS *CONSPICUOUSLY*, HAD BEEN INVESTIGATING THIS SAME AREA.

I'M SURE YOU CAN ALL GUESS WHICH MEDIUM I MEAN!

WAK!

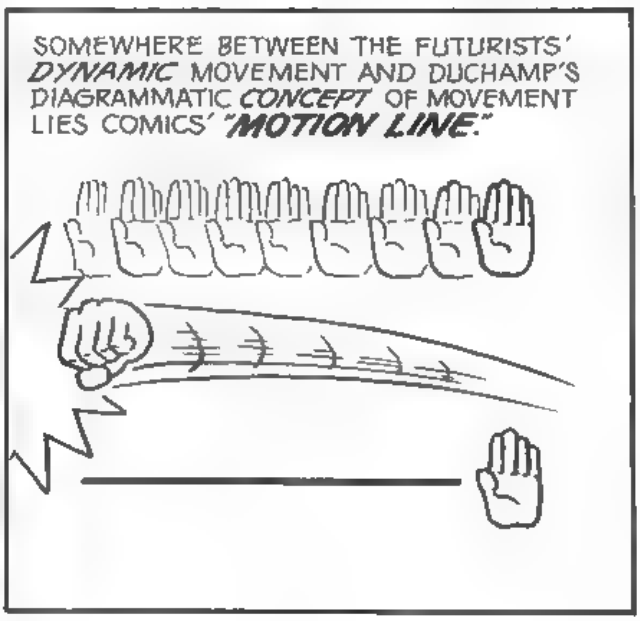

FROM ITS *EARLIEST DAYS*, THE MODERN COMIC HAS GRAPPLED WITH THE PROBLEM OF SHOWING MOTION IN A *STATIC MEDIUM*.
HOW DO YOU SHOW THIS ASPECT OF TIME IN AN ART WHERE *TIME STANDS STILL?*


AND IN COMICS, UNLIKE PAINTING, IT WAS MORE THAN JUST A *THEORETICAL QUESTION!*
SMASH!


THOUGH SEQUENTIAL ART SURVIVED FOR MANY CENTURIES *WITHOUT* DEPICTING MOTION, ONCE THE GENIE WAS OUT OF THE BOTTLE IT WAS PERHAPS *INEVITABLE* THAT MORE AND MORE EFFICIENT MEANS WOULD BE SOUGHT. AT FIRST, THIS SEARCH CENTERED ON *MULTIPLE* IMAGES IN SEQUENCE

BUT JUST AS A SINGLE PANEL CAN REPRESENT A *SPAN* OF TIME THROUGH *SOUND*--
*SMILE!*
PAF!

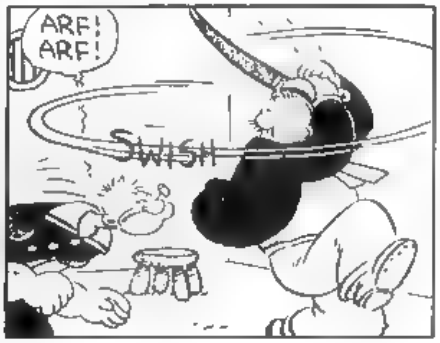
--SO TOO CAN A SINGLE PANEL REPRESENT A SPAN OF TIME THROUGH *PICTURES!*


SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE FUTURISTS' *DYNAMIC* MOVEMENT AND DUCHAMP'S DIAGRAMMATIC *CONCEPT* OF MOVEMENT LIES COMICS' *"MOTION LINE."*

IN THE BEGINNING, MOTION LINES--OR *"ZIP-RIBBONS"* AS SOME CALL THEM--WERE *WILD, MESSY,* ALMOST ***DESPERATE*** ATTEMPTS TO REPRESENT THE PATHS OF *MOVING OBJECTS* THROUGH *SPACE.*

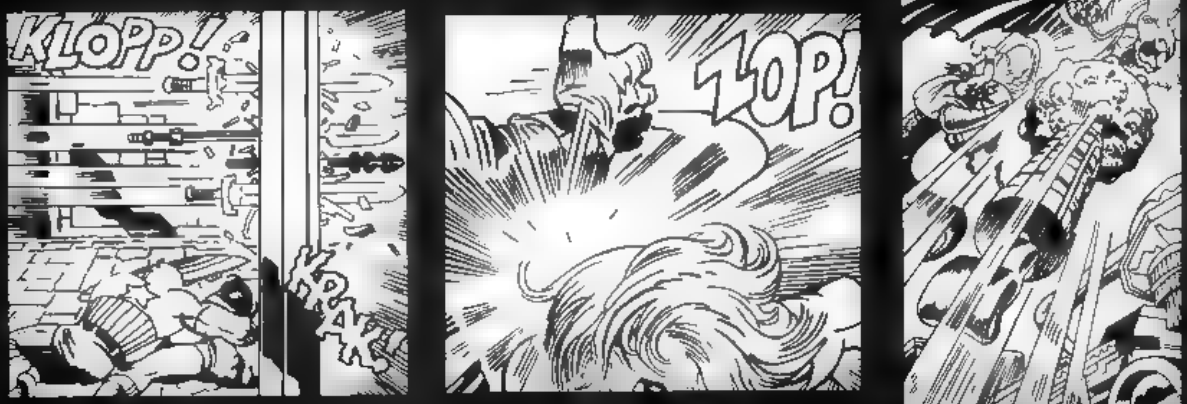
DIE, FOOL THAT YOU ARE, TO MATCH YOUR STRENGTH AGAINST THAT OF THE REDOUBTABLE BRAGGO THE MONK!
COMING TO, EH? BUT I'LL CLIMB THIS ICE-BERG AND THEN WE'LL SHOW HIM WHAT THE GREAT BRAGGO
HEAVENS! MY POOR BRAGGO! I KNEW THAT HORRID OLD BOOK WOULD MAKE YOU DREAM!

OVER THE YEARS, THESE LINES BECAME MORE *REFINED* AND *STYLIZED,* EVEN ***DIAGRAMMATIC.***




EVENTUALLY, IN THE HANDS OF *HEROIC FANTASY* ARTISTS LIKE ***BILL EVERETT*** AND ***JACK KIRBY***--

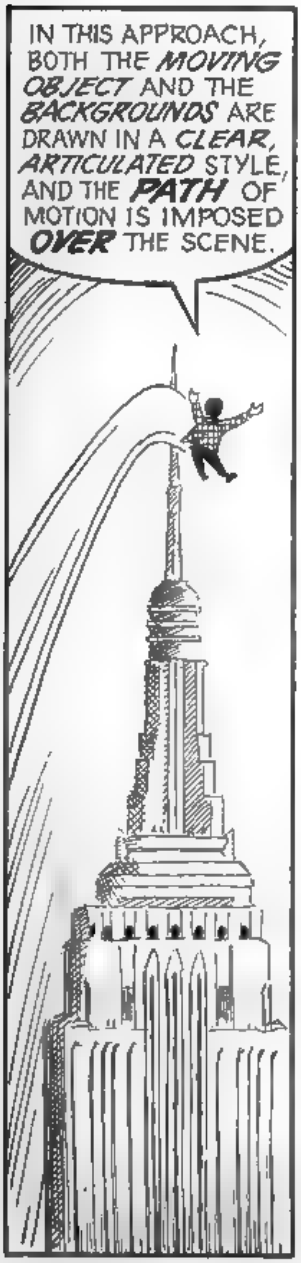
--THOSE SAME LINES BECAME ***SO*** STYLIZED AS TO ALMOST HAVE A *LIFE* AND *PHYSICAL PRESENCE* ***ALL THEIR OWN!***




"POPEYE" AND "BRAGGO THE MONK" © KING FEATURES SYNDICATE, INC.

ART (CENTER AND ABOVE RIGHT) © D.C. COMICS. (LEFT AND RIGHT) © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP INC.

BECAUSE OF THEIR ABILITY TO DEPICT ACTION WITH DRAMA, SUCH CONSPICUOUS ACTION LINES HAVE BEEN AN AMERICAN SPECIALTY FOR YEARS

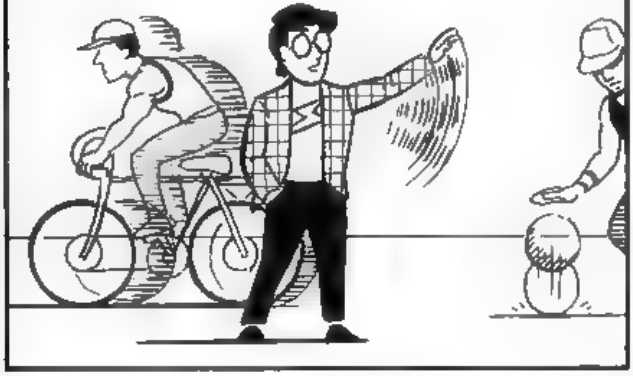

IN THIS APPROACH, BOTH THE MOVING OBJECT AND THE BACKGROUNDS ARE DRAWN IN A CLEAR, ARTICULATED STYLE, AND THE PATH OF MOTION IS IMPOSED OVER THE SCENE.

OTHER ARTISTS TRIED ADDITIONAL EFFECTS SUCH AS MULTIPLE IMAGES OF THE SUBJECT, ATTEMPTING TO INVOLVE THE READER MORE DEEPLY IN THE ACTION *

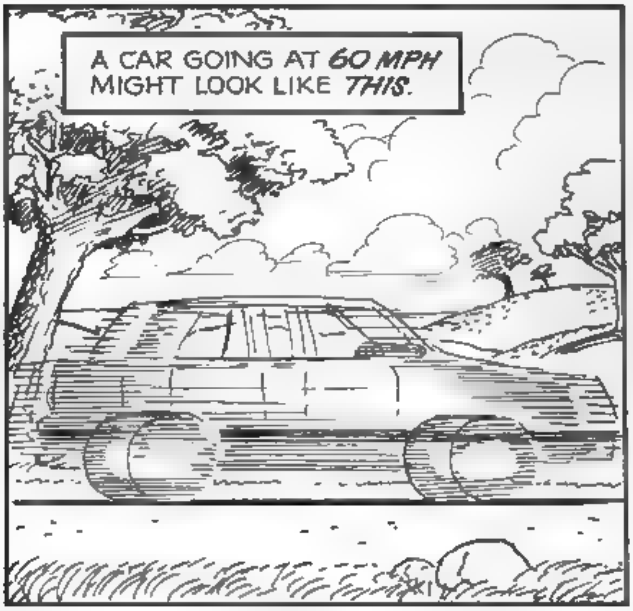
STILL OTHERS, SUCH AS MARVEL'S GENE COLAN, BEGAN INCORPORATING PHOTOGRAPHIC STREAKING EFFECTS WITH SOME INTRIGUING RESULTS IN THE SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES.

* MULTIPLE IMAGES CAN BE FOUND IN THE WORK OF KRIGSTEIN, INFANTINO AND OTHERS.

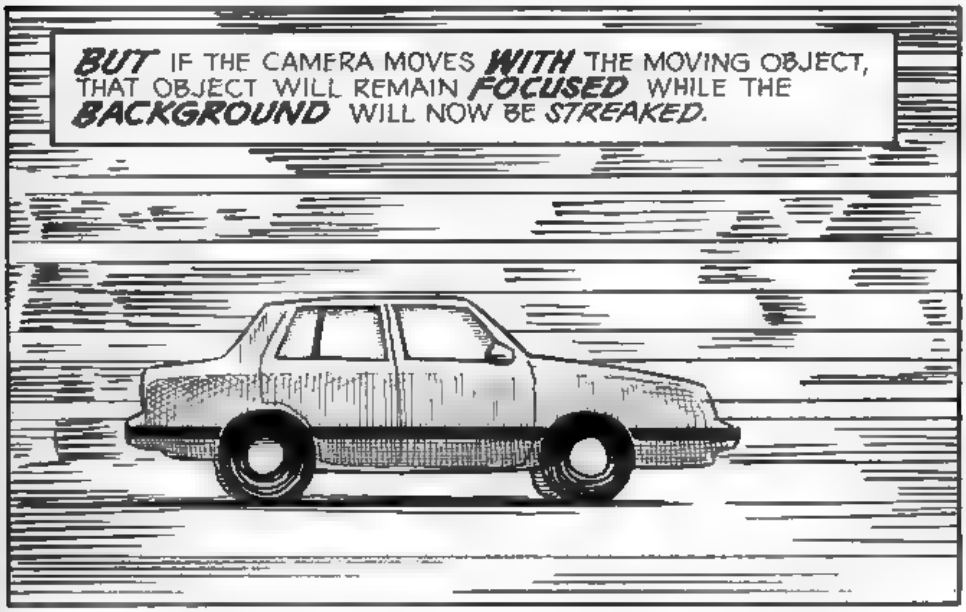
COLAN, WHO WAS ALSO A *FILM-BUFF*, WAS OF COURSE AWARE THAT WHEN A CAMERA'S SHUTTER SPEED IS TOO SLOW TO FULLY FREEZE A MOVING OBJECT'S IMAGE, AN INTERESTING *BLURRING* EFFECT OCCURS



A CAR GOING AT *60 MPH* MIGHT LOOK LIKE *THIS.*



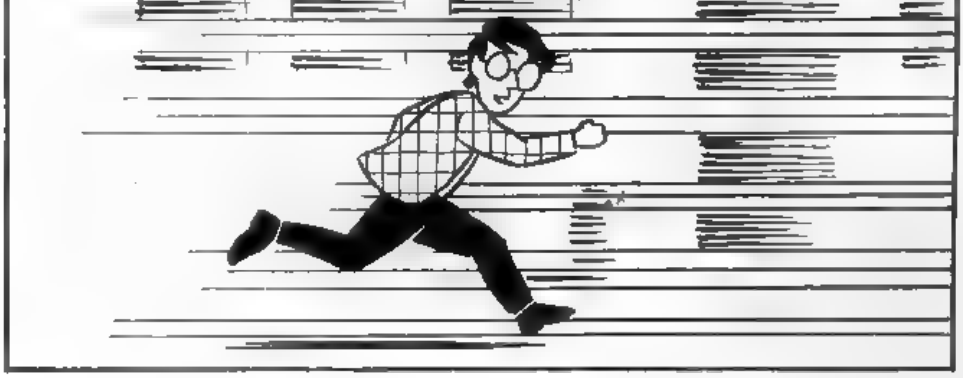
***BUT*** IF THE CAMERA MOVES ***WITH*** THE MOVING OBJECT, THAT OBJECT WILL REMAIN ***FOCUSED*** WHILE THE ***BACKGROUND*** WILL NOW BE *STREAKED.*

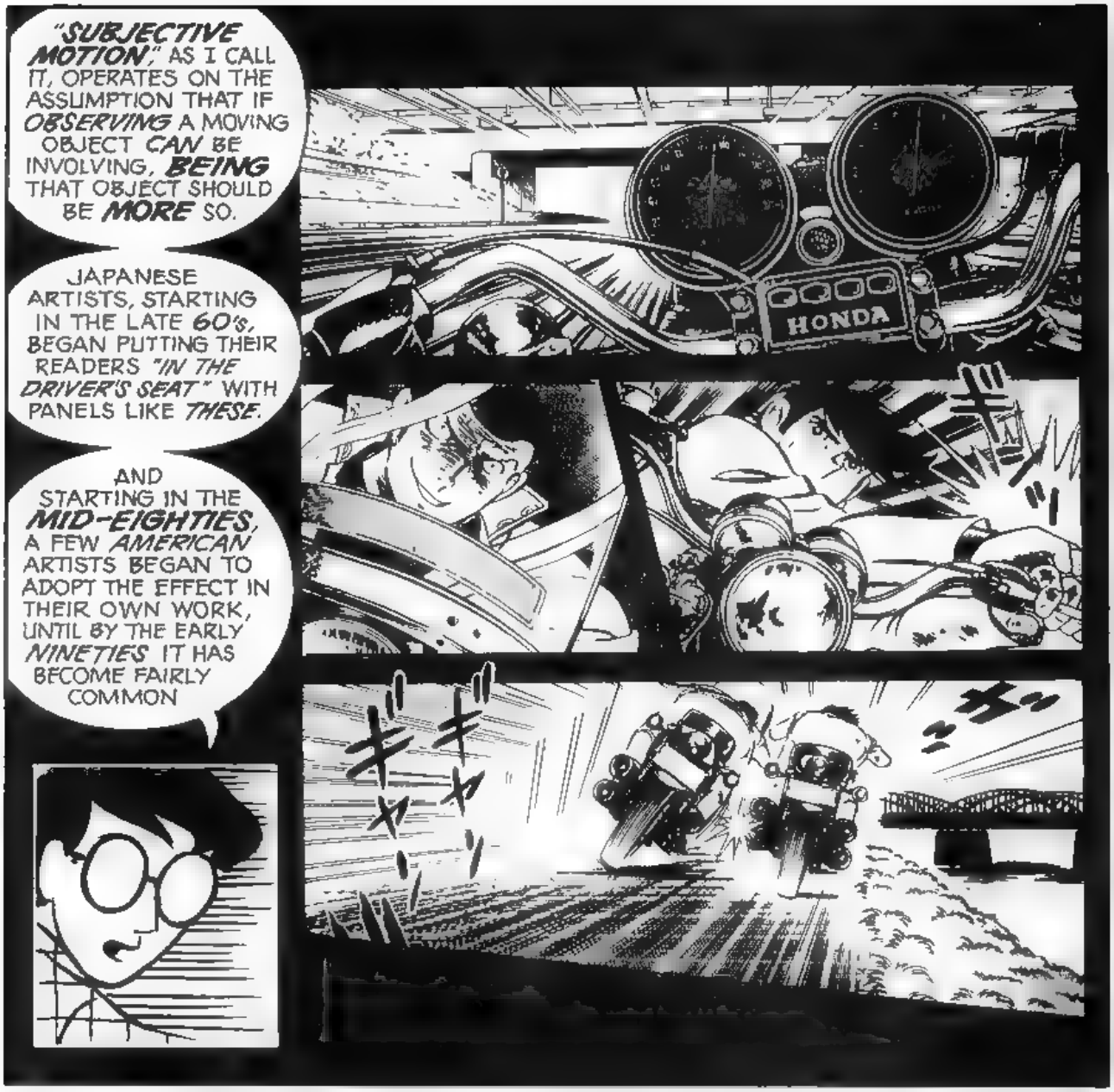


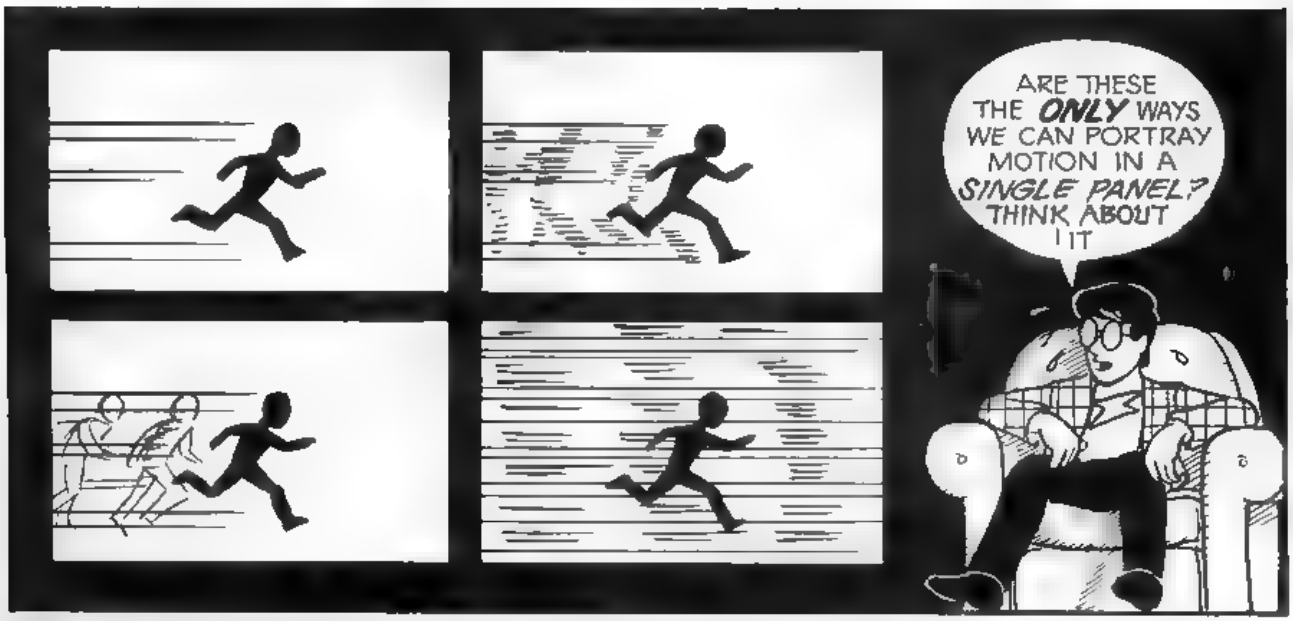
***AMERICAN*** COMICS ARTISTS TOOK LITTLE OR NO INTEREST IN THIS KIND OF *PHOTOGRAPHIC TRICKERY.*

AND IN ***EUROPE*** WHERE MOTION LINES WERE USED ONLY *SPARINGLY,* IT WAS LIKEWISE IGNORED.

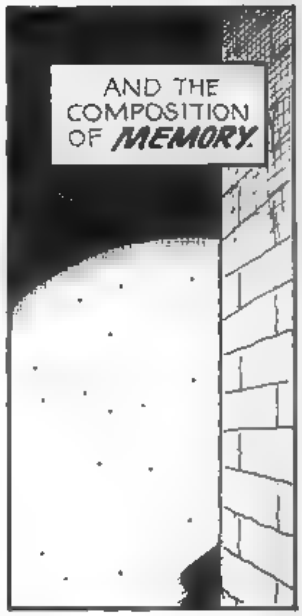
BUT IN ***JAPAN***, ONCE AGAIN, A VERY *DIFFERENT* COMICS CULTURE EMBRACED THIS VERY DIFFERENT CONCEPT OF MOTION AS *THEIR OWN!*



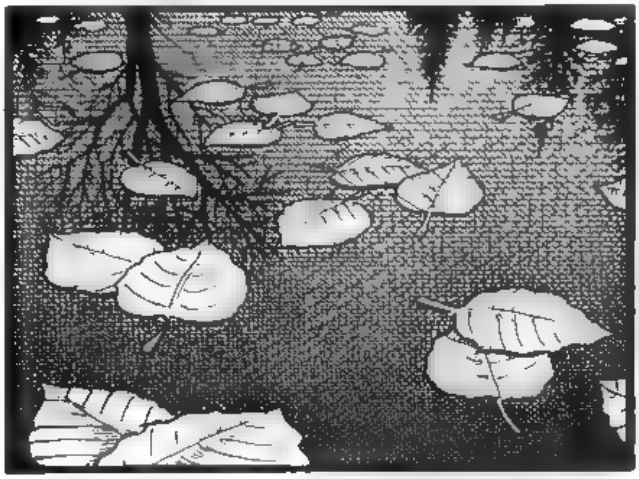

"SUBJECTIVE MOTION," AS I CALL IT, OPERATES ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT IF OBSERVING A MOVING OBJECT CAN BE INVOLVING, BEING THAT OBJECT SHOULD BE MORE SO.
JAPANESE ARTISTS, STARTING IN THE LATE 60's, BEGAN PUTTING THEIR READERS "IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT" WITH PANELS LIKE THESE.
AND STARTING IN THE MID-EIGHTIES, A FEW AMERICAN ARTISTS BEGAN TO ADOPT THE EFFECT IN THEIR OWN WORK, UNTIL BY THE EARLY NINETIES IT HAS BECOME FAIRLY COMMON
HONDA
ギギギ
©石井いさみ

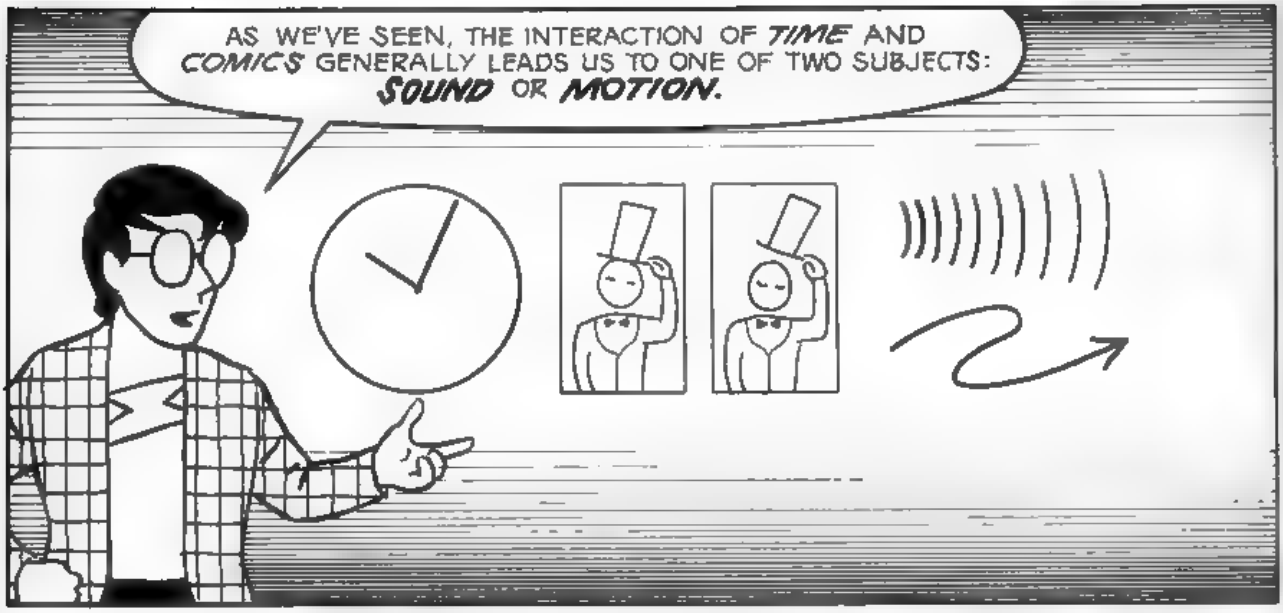

ARE THESE THE ONLY WAYS WE CAN PORTRAY MOTION IN A SINGLE PANEL? THINK ABOUT IT

BY INTRODUCING TIME INTO THE EQUATION, COMICS ARTISTS ARE ARRANGING THE PAGE IN WAYS NOT ALWAYS CONDUCIVE TO TRADITIONAL PICTURE-MAKING

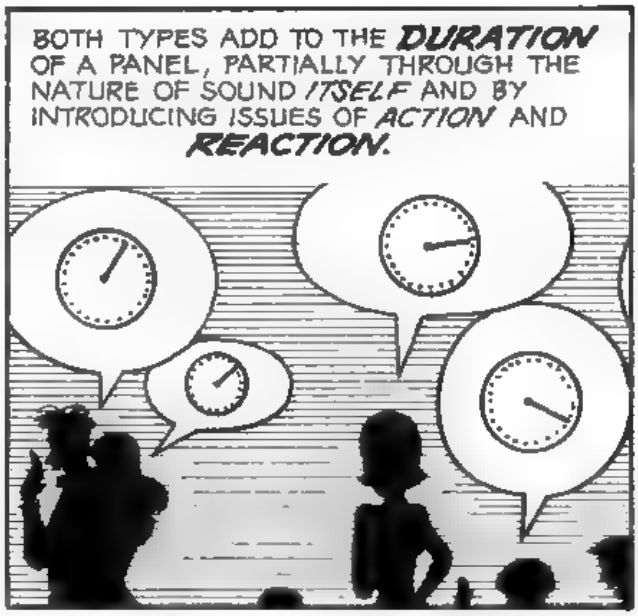


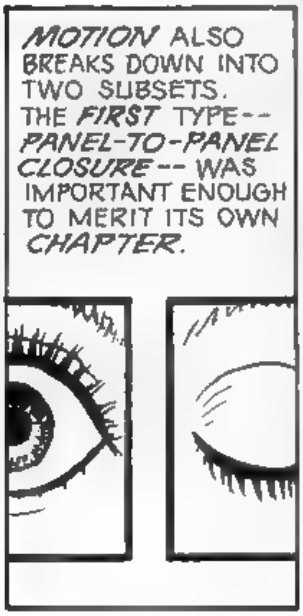
THE NATURAL WORLD CREATES GREAT BEAUTY EVERY DAY, YET THE ONLY RULES OF COMPOSITION IT FOLLOWS ARE THOSE OF FUNCTION AND CHANCE.

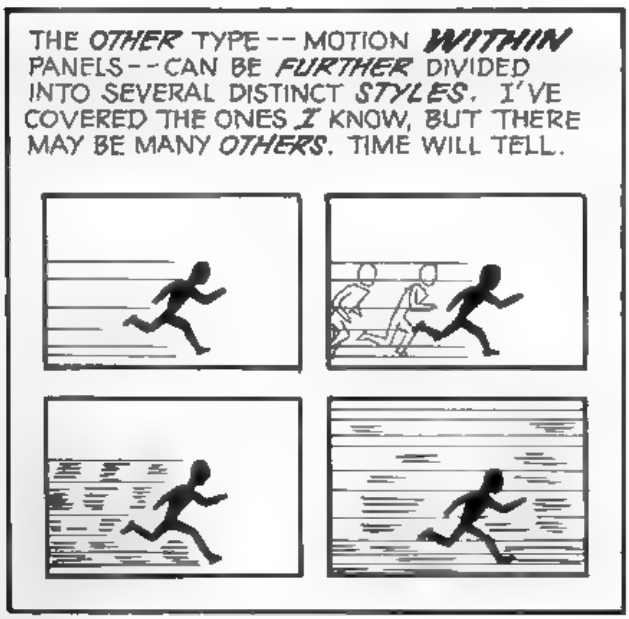


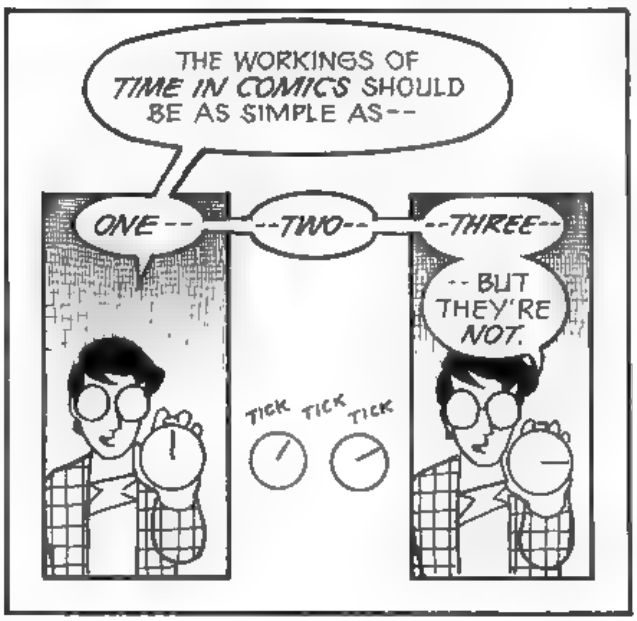

AS WE'VE SEEN, THE INTERACTION OF TIME AND COMICS GENERALLY LEADS US TO ONE OF TWO SUBJECTS: SOUND OR MOTION.

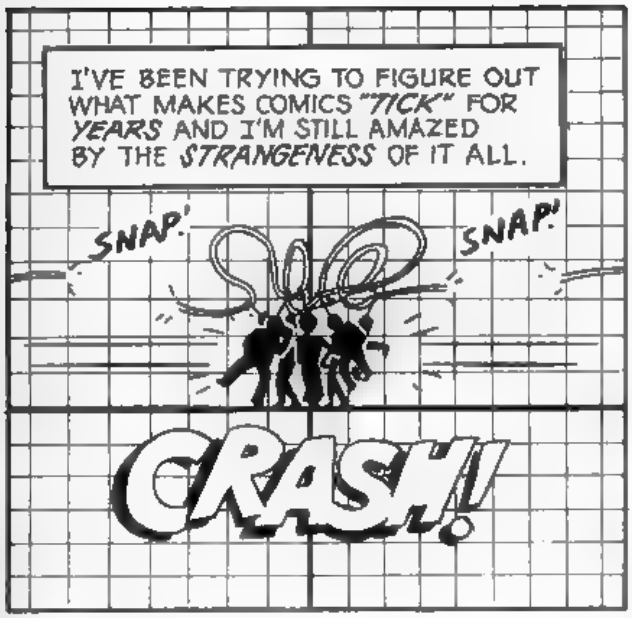
SOUND BREAKS DOWN INTO TWO SUBSETS: WORD BALLOONS AND SOUND EFFECTS.

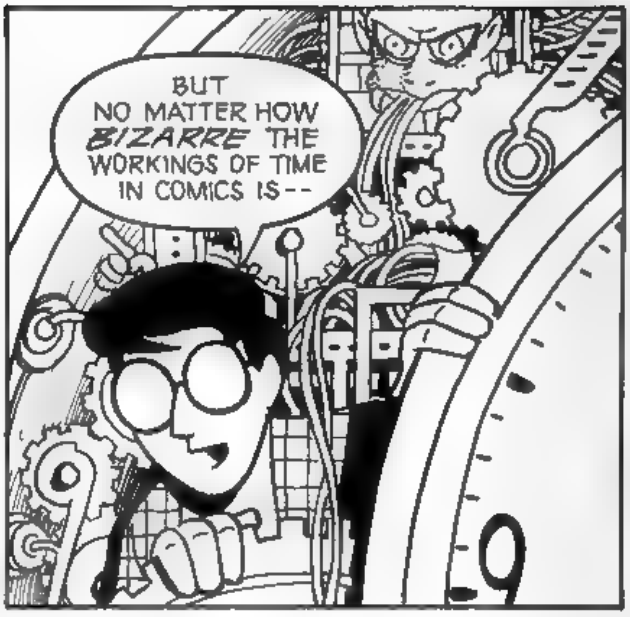

BOTH TYPES ADD TO THE DURATION OF A PANEL, PARTIALLY THROUGH THE NATURE OF SOUND ITSELF AND BY INTRODUCING ISSUES OF ACTION AND REACTION.


MOTION ALSO BREAKS DOWN INTO TWO SUBSETS. THE FIRST TYPE-- PANEL-TO-PANEL CLOSURE-- WAS IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO MERIT ITS OWN CHAPTER.

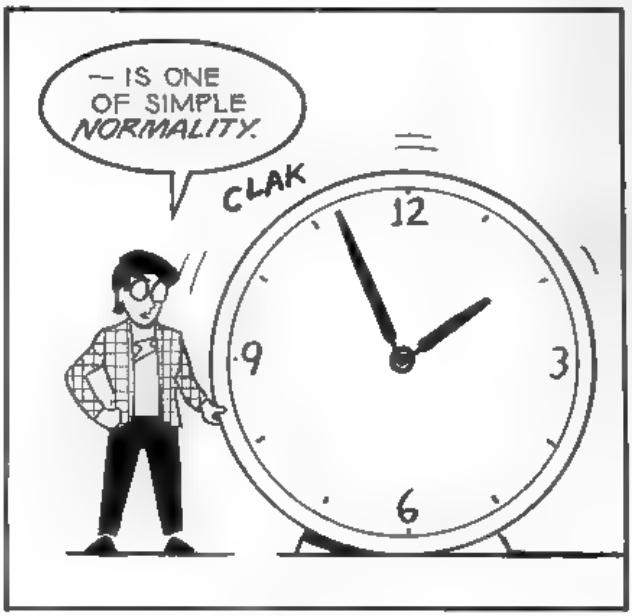

THE OTHER TYPE -- MOTION WITHIN PANELS -- CAN BE FURTHER DIVIDED INTO SEVERAL DISTINCT STYLES. I'VE COVERED THE ONES I KNOW, BUT THERE MAY BE MANY OTHERS. TIME WILL TELL.

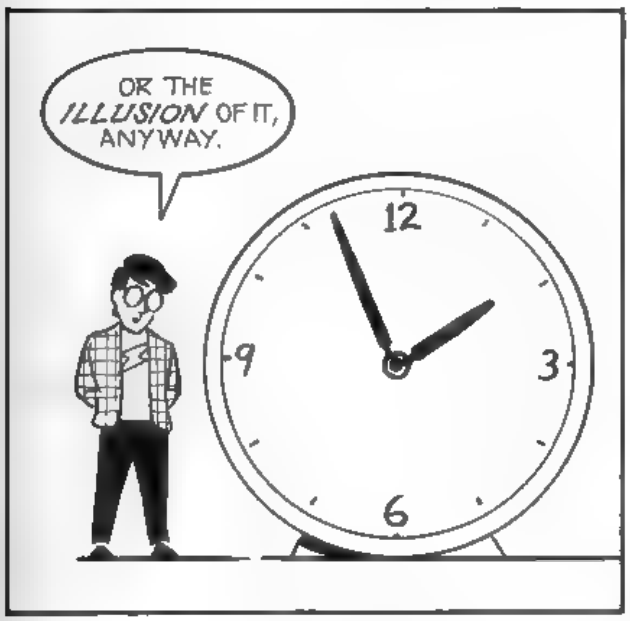

THE WORKINGS OF TIME IN COMICS SHOULD BE AS SIMPLE AS--
ONE --
--TWO--
--THREE--
-- BUT THEY'RE NOT.
TICK TICK TICK


I'VE BEEN TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT MAKES COMICS "TICK" FOR YEARS AND I'M STILL AMAZED BY THE STRANGENESS OF IT ALL.
SNAP!
SNAP!
CRASH!

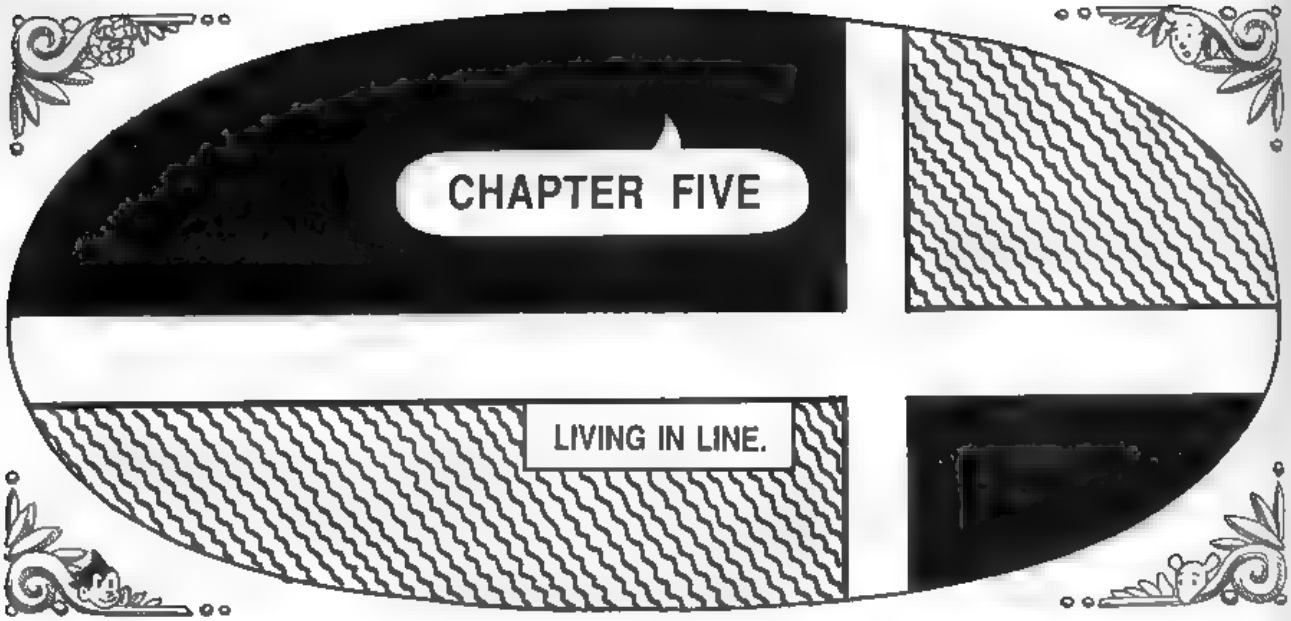

BUT NO MATTER HOW BIZARRE THE WORKINGS OF TIME IN COMICS IS--

--THE FACE IT PRESENTS TO THE READER--


-- IS ONE OF SIMPLE NORMALITY.
CLAK

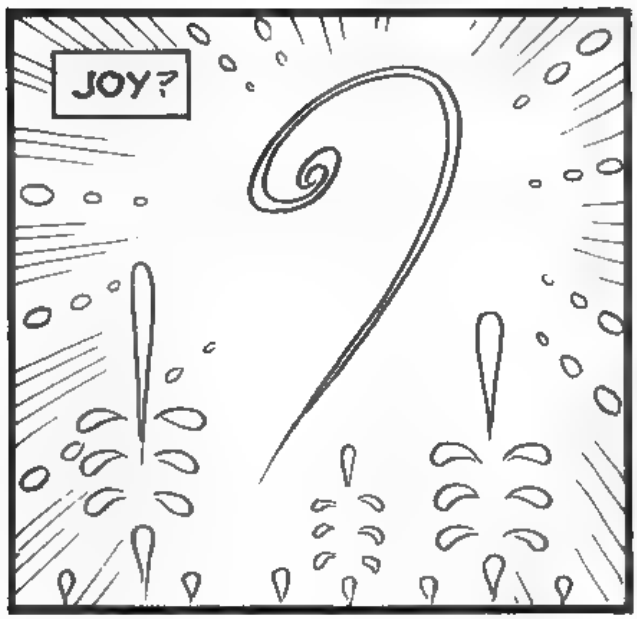

OR THE ILLUSION OF IT, ANYWAY.

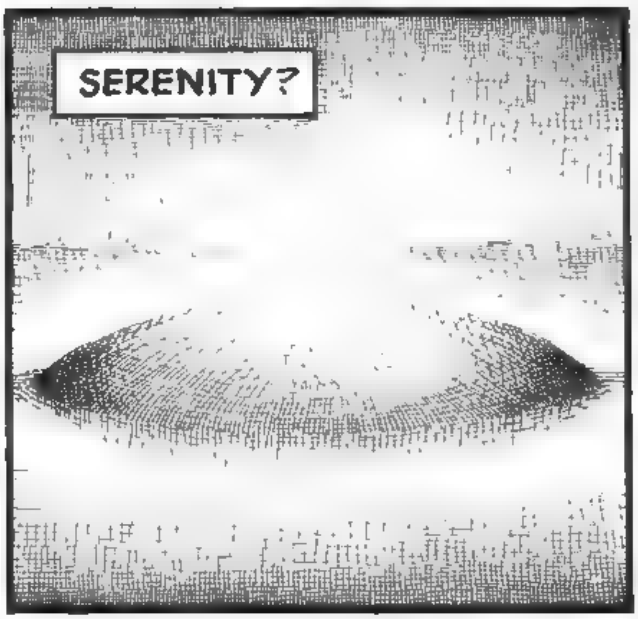
ALL DEPENDS ON YOUR FRAME OF MIND.

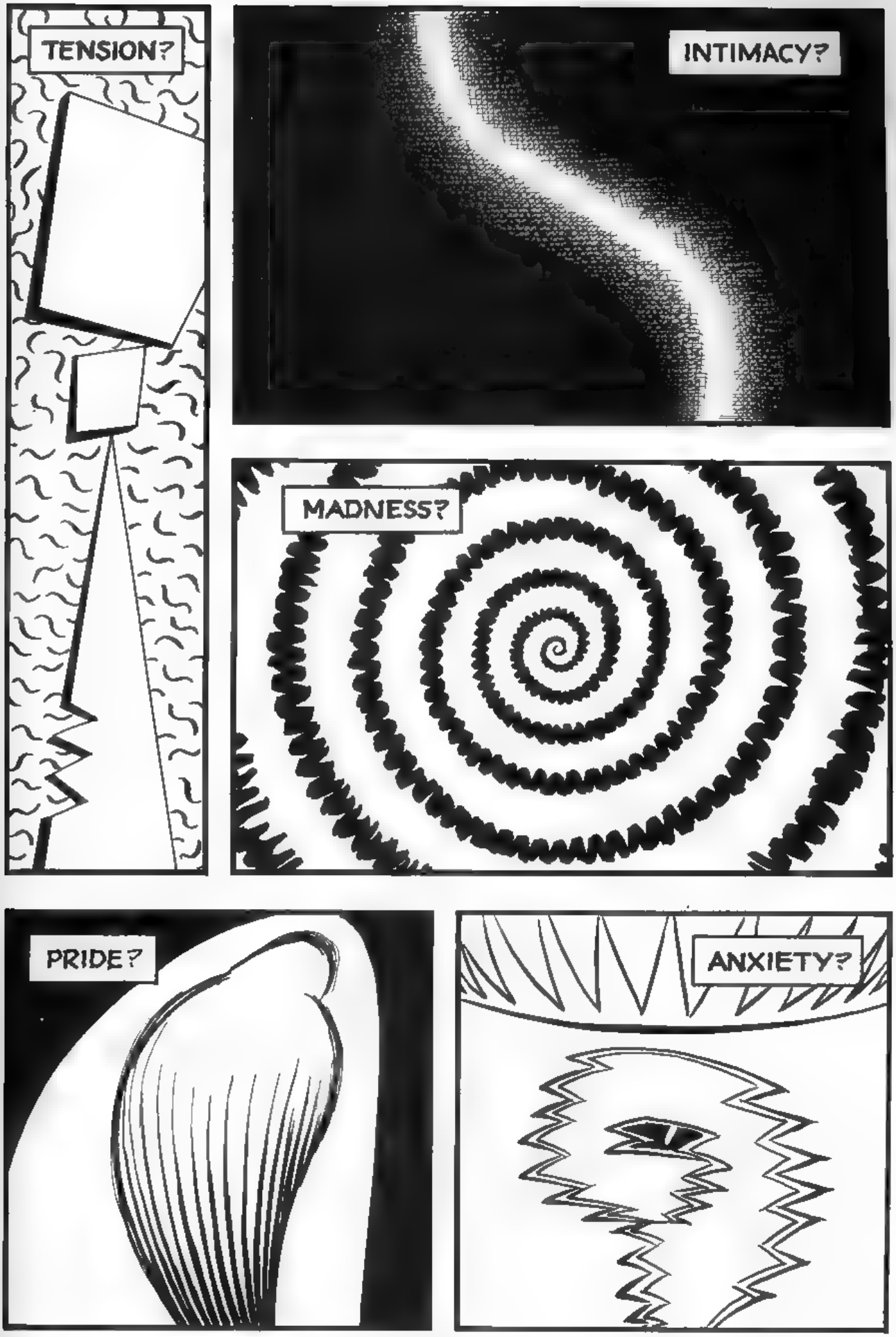

CHAPTER FIVE
LIVING IN LINE.

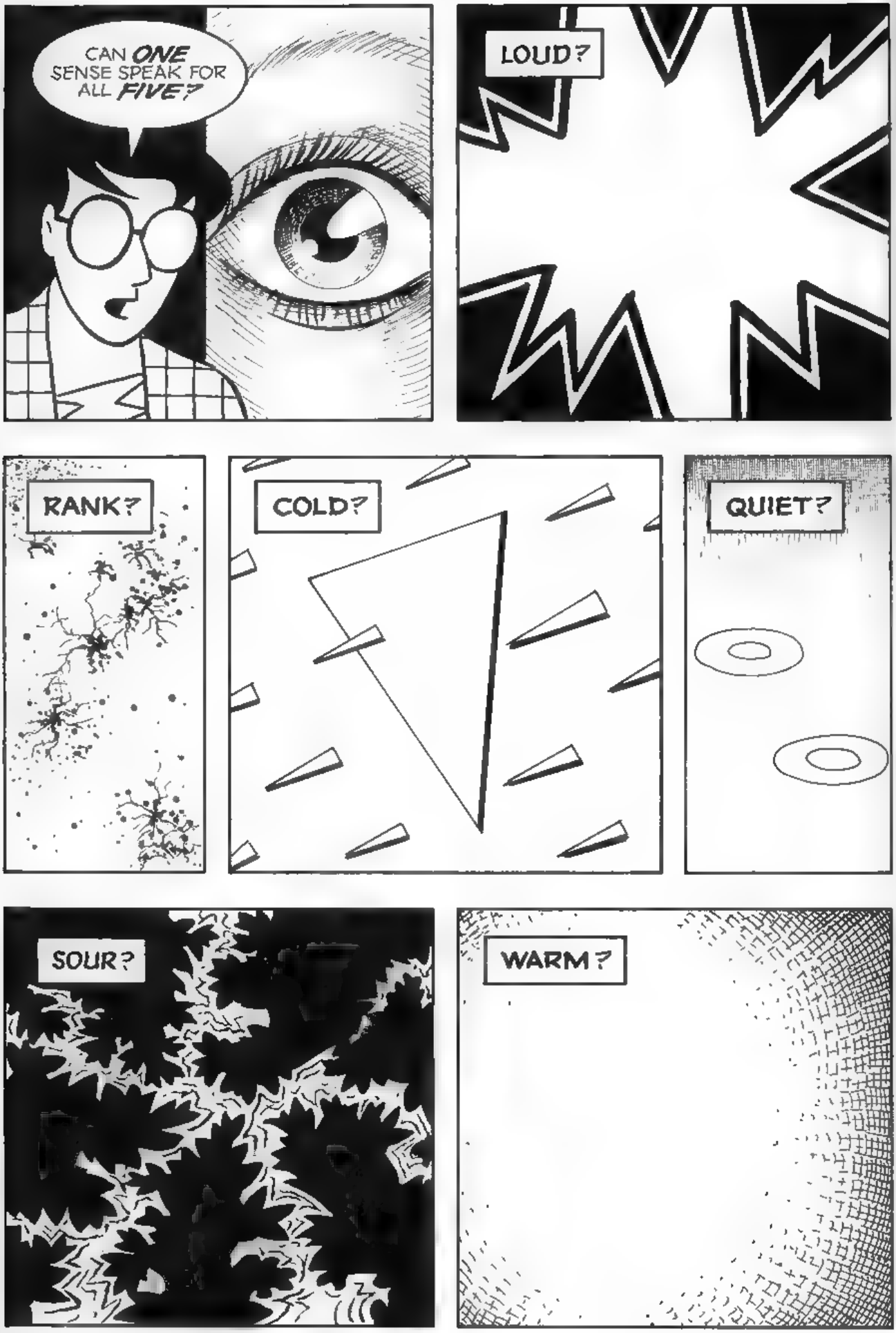
CAN EMOTIONS BE MADE VISIBLE?

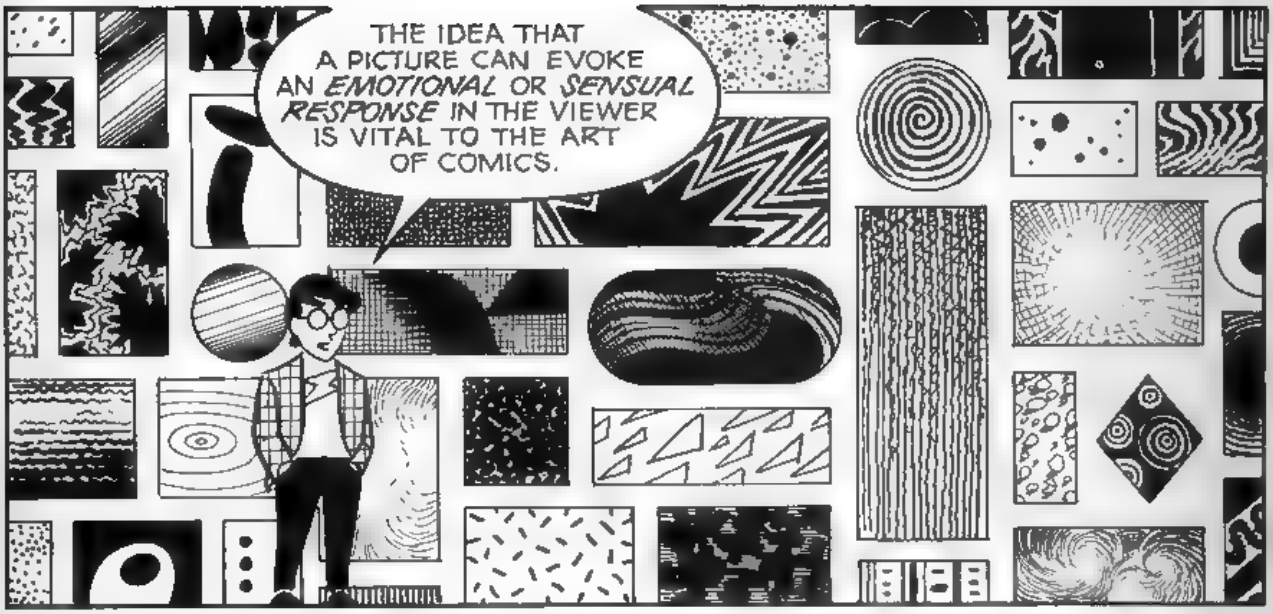
IS THIS ANGER?


JOY?

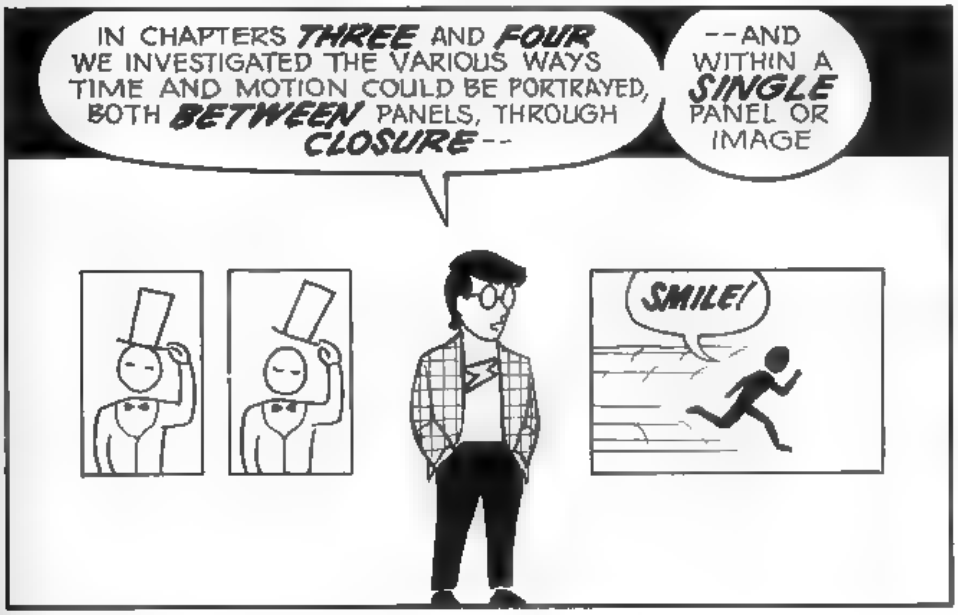

SERENITY?


TENSION?
INTIMACY?
MADNESS?
PRIDE?
ANXIETY?


CAN ONE SENSE SPEAK FOR ALL FIVE?
LOUD?
RANK?
COLD?
QUIET?
SOUR?
WARM?




SOME IMAGES INSPIRED BY THE PAINTINGS OF ADAM PHILIPS


IN CHAPTERS THREE AND FOUR WE INVESTIGATED THE VARIOUS WAYS TIME AND MOTION COULD BE PORTRAYED, BOTH BETWEEN PANELS, THROUGH CLOSURE--
--AND WITHIN A SINGLE PANEL OR IMAGE
SMILE!

THE SCREAM 1895 LITHOGRAPH BY EDVARD MUNCH

IN THE *LATE NINETEENTH* AND *EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES*, SOMETHING KIND OF ***SCARY*** WAS GOING ON. .

NO SOONER HAD THE *IMPRESSIONISTS* FINALLY CONVINCED THEIR PEERS THAT THE WORLD *THEY* SAW WAS THE WORLD AS IT IS *TRULY* SEEN--

--THAN ANOTHER ***UNSEEN*** WORLD BEGAN TO MAKE ITSELF ***VISIBLE.***

IN THE WORKS OF ***EDVARD MUNCH*** AND ***VINCENT VAN GOGH***, THE OBJECTIVE STUDY OF LIGHT SO PRIZED BY THE *IMPRESSIONIST MAINSTREAM* WAS BEING *ABANDONED* IN FAVOR OF A NEW, FRIGHTENINGLY ***SUBJECTIVE*** APPROACH

*EXPRESSIONISM*, AS IT CAME TO BE CALLED, DIDN'T START AS A *SCIENTIFIC ART*, BUT RATHER AS AN HONEST *EXPRESSION* OF THE INTERNAL TURMOIL THESE ARTISTS JUST COULD NOT *REPRESS*.

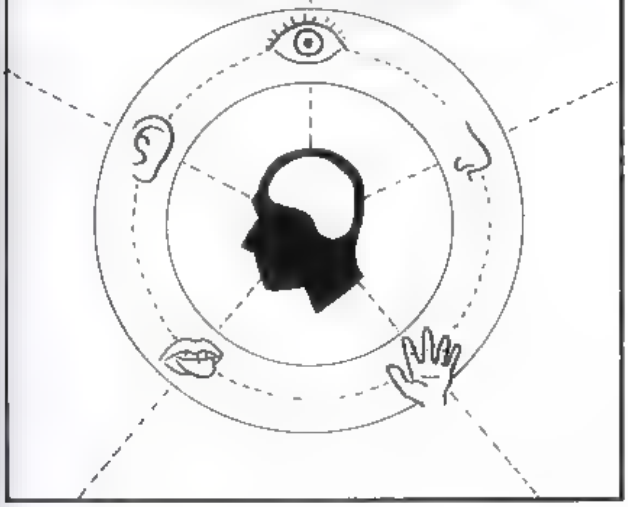
THE *SCIENCE* OF IT WASN'T FAR *BEHIND* THOUGH!

AS THE *NEW CENTURY* GOT UNDER WAY, *COOLER HEADS* SUCH AS *WASSILY KANDINSKY* TOOK *GREAT INTEREST* IN THE POWER OF *LINE, SHAPE* AND *COLOR* TO SUGGEST THE INNER STATE OF THE ARTIST ***AND*** TO PROVOKE THE *FIVE SENSES*.

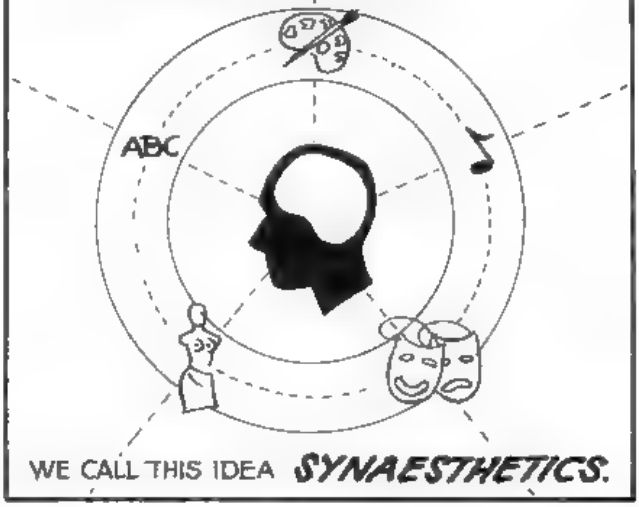
ANGRY *REDS*...
PLACID *BLUES*..
ANXIOUS *TEXTURES*...
LOUD *SHAPES*...
QUIET *LINES*...
COLD *GREENS*...

THESE WERE *STRANGE IDEAS* IN 1912!

KANDINSKY AND HIS PEERS WERE SEARCHING FOR AN ART THAT MIGHT SOMEHOW ***UNITE THE SENSES***--



--AND IN *DOING SO*, UNITE THE DIFFERENT ARTFORMS WHICH *APPEALED* TO THOSE DIFFERENT SENSES.

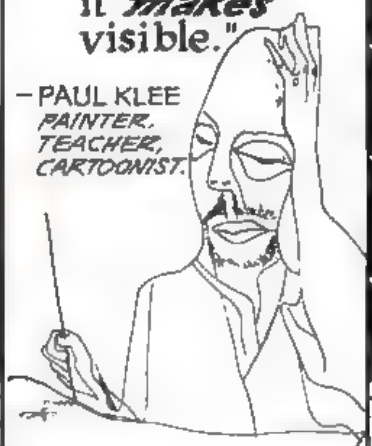



WE CALL THIS IDEA ***SYNAESTHETICS.***

NOT *SURPRISING*, THEN, THAT SIMILAR IDEAS WERE EXPRESSED BY CREATORS IN *OTHER* FIELDS SUCH AS *RICHARD WAGNER* AND THE FRENCH POET *BAUDELAIRE*.

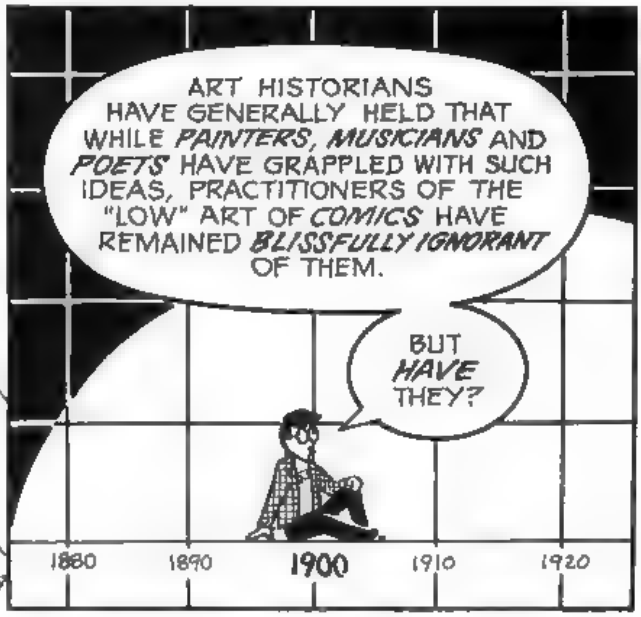
"Art does not reproduce the visible; rather, it *makes* visible."

– PAUL KLEE
*PAINTER, TEACHER, CARTOONIST.*



ART HISTORIANS HAVE GENERALLY HELD THAT WHILE *PAINTERS, MUSICIANS* AND *POETS* HAVE GRAPPLED WITH SUCH IDEAS, PRACTITIONERS OF THE "LOW" ART OF *COMICS* HAVE REMAINED ***BLISSFULLY IGNORANT*** OF THEM.

BUT *HAVE* THEY?

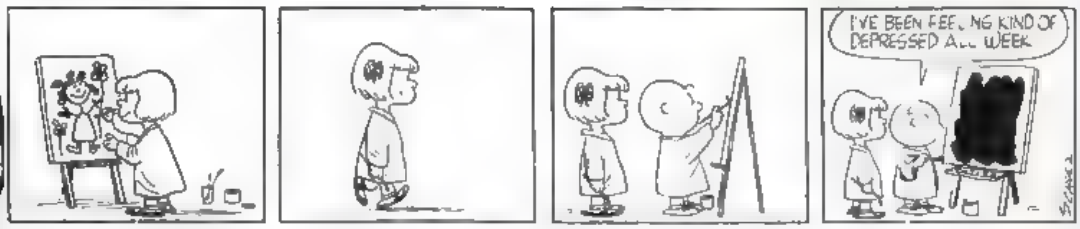


IN SURVEYING A *CENTURY* OF COMICS, ONE FINDS CREATORS LIKE THE UNDERGROUND'S *RORY HAYES*, WHO ARE *BLATANTLY EXPRESSIONISTIC*, BUT SUCH ARTISTS ARE *FEW AND FAR BETWEEN*.

MOST HAVE WORKED IN A FAIRLY *STRAIGHTFORWARD STYLE*. *ICONIC*, MAYBE, BUT NOT FILLED WITH THE EXPRESSIVE LINES OF A *MUNCH* OR THE COLORS OF A *VAN GOGH*.

CAN WE SAY, THEREFORE, THAT ONE OF THESE TWO CREATORS IS EXPRESSING MOOD AND EMOTION AND THE OTHER IS *NOT*? OR DOES THE DIFFERENCE LIE IN *WHAT* IS BEING EXPRESSED?

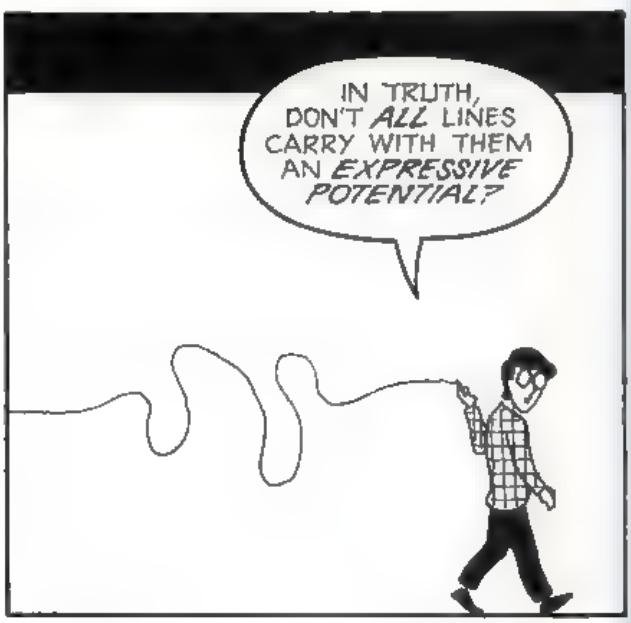
**PEANUTS** **CHARLES SCHULZ**



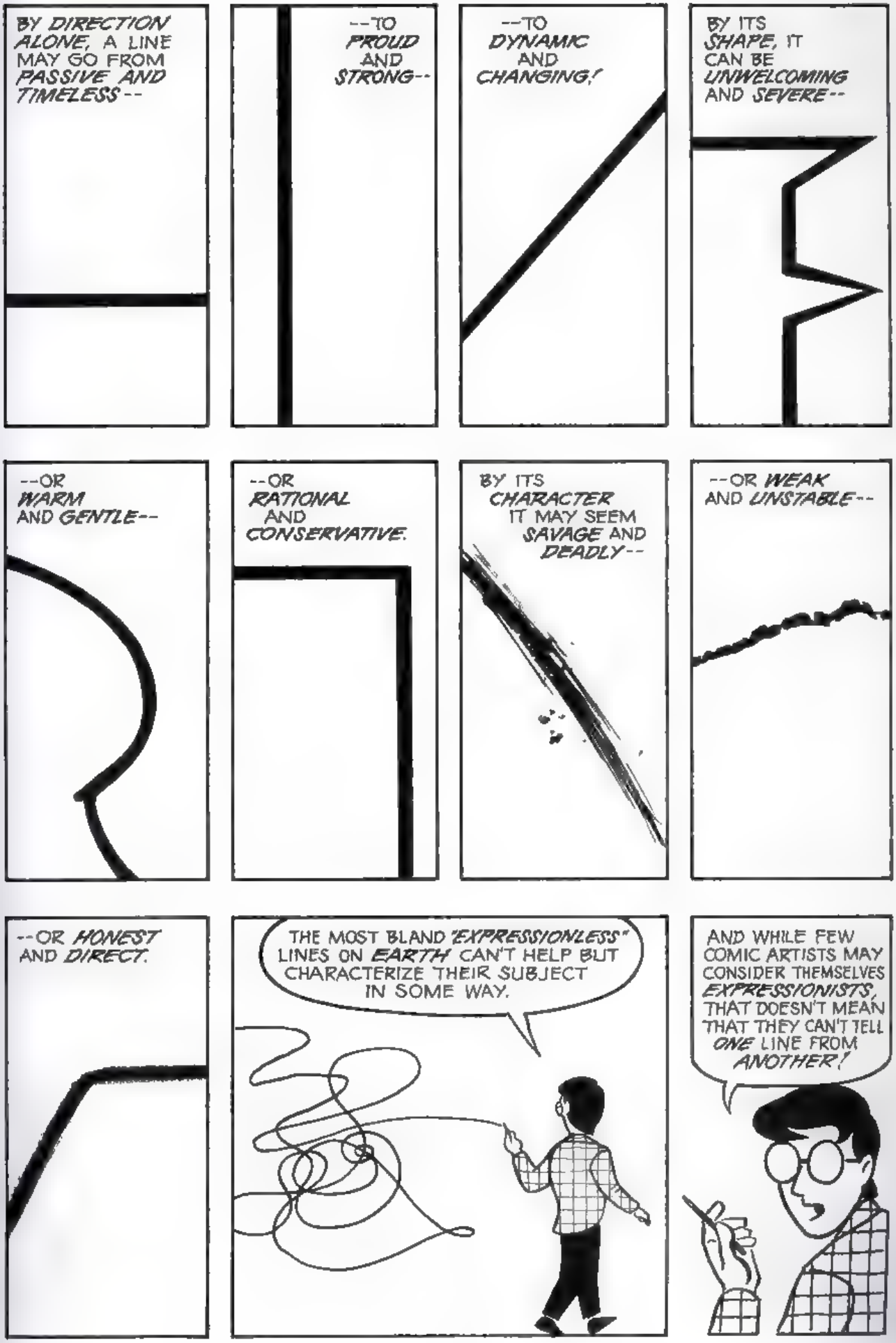

IF *THESE* LINES ARE EXPRESSIVE OF *FEAR, ANXIETY* AND *MADNESS*--

--THEN COULDN'T *THESE* LINES BE SAID TO PORTRAY *CALM, REASON* AND *INTROSPECTION*?

IN TRUTH, DON'T *ALL* LINES CARRY WITH THEM AN *EXPRESSIVE POTENTIAL*?



PEANUTS REPRINTED BY PERMISSION OF U F S, INC


BY DIRECTION ALONE, A LINE MAY GO FROM PASSIVE AND TIMELESS--
--TO PROUD AND STRONG--
--TO DYNAMIC AND CHANGING!
BY ITS SHAPE, IT CAN BE UNWELCOMING AND SEVERE--
--OR WARM AND GENTLE--
--OR RATIONAL AND CONSERVATIVE.
BY ITS CHARACTER IT MAY SEEM SAVAGE AND DEADLY--
--OR WEAK AND UNSTABLE--
--OR HONEST AND DIRECT.
THE MOST BLAND "EXPRESSIONLESS" LINES ON EARTH CAN'T HELP BUT CHARACTERIZE THEIR SUBJECT IN SOME WAY.
AND WHILE FEW COMIC ARTISTS MAY CONSIDER THEMSELVES EXPRESSIONISTS, THAT DOESN'T MEAN THAT THEY CAN'T TELL ONE LINE FROM ANOTHER!

IN **DICK TRACY**, FOR EXAMPLE, CHESTER GOULD USED *BOLD LINES, OBTUSE ANGLES* AND *HEAVY BLACKS* TO SUGGEST THE MOOD OF A *GRIM, DEADLY* WORLD OF *ADULTS*--

--WHILE THE *GENTLE CURVES* AND *OPEN LINES* OF *CARL BARKS'* **UNCLE SCROOGE** CONVEY A FEELING OF *WHIMSY, YOUTH* AND *INNOCENCE*.

IN *R. CRUMB'S* WORLD, THE *CURVES* OF *INNOCENCE* ARE **BETRAYED** BY THE *NEUROTIC QUILL-LINES* OF *MODERN ADULTHOOD*, AND LEFT *PAINFULLY OUT OF PLACE*--

--WHILE IN *KRYSTINE KRYTTRE'S* ART, THE CURVES OF CHILDHOOD AND THE MAD LINES OF A *MUNCH* CREATE A *CRAZY TODDLER LOOK*.

IN THE *MID-1960s* WHEN THE *AVERAGE MARVEL READER* WAS *PRE-ADOLESCENT*, POPULAR INKERS USED *DYNAMIC* BUT *FRIENDLY* LINES A LA *KIRBY/SINNOTT*.

BUT WHEN MARVEL'S READER BASE *GREW* INTO THE *ANXIETIES* OF **ADOLESCENCE**, THE *HOSTILE, JAGGED* LINES OF A *ROB LIEFELD* STRUCK A MORE *RESPONSIVE CHORD*

FOR *DECADES* OF COLOR COMIC BOOKS, THE *SIGNATURE STYLES* OF INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS LIKE *NICK CARDY* HAVE INFUSED *PERSONAL EXPRESSION* INTO *EVERY STORY*--

--WHILE *JULES FEIFFER'S UNEVEN LINES* DID **BATTLE** WITH THEMSELVES IN A *PANTOMIME* OF THE *INNER STRUGGLES* OF *MODERN LIFE*.

IN *JOSÉ MUNOZ'S* WORK, *DENSE PUDDLES OF INK* AND *FRAYING LINEWORK COMBINE* TO EVOKE A WORLD OF *DEPRAVITY* AND *MORBID DECAY*--

--WHILE *JOOST SWARTE'S CRISP ELEGANT LINES* AND *JAZZY DESIGNS* SPEAK OF *COOL SOPHISTICATION* AND *IRONY*

IN SPIEGELMAN'S *"PRISONER ON THE HELL PLANET," DELIBERATELY EXPRESSIONISTIC LINES* DEPICT A *TRUE-LIFE HORROR STORY*.

AND IN EISNER'S *MODERN* WORK A **FULL RANGE** OF LINE STYLES CAPTURE A FULL RANGE OF MOODS AND *EMOTIONS*.

SEE PAGE 216 FOR COPYRIGHT INFORMATION.

NOW, IF PICTURES CAN, THROUGH THEIR RENDERING, REPRESENT ***INVISIBLE*** CONCERNS SUCH AS *EMOTIONS* AND THE *OTHER SENSES*--

--THEN THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN PICTURES AND *OTHER* TYPES OF ICONS LIKE LANGUAGE WHICH ***SPECIALIZE*** IN THE INVISIBLE MAY SEEM A BIT *BLURRY.*

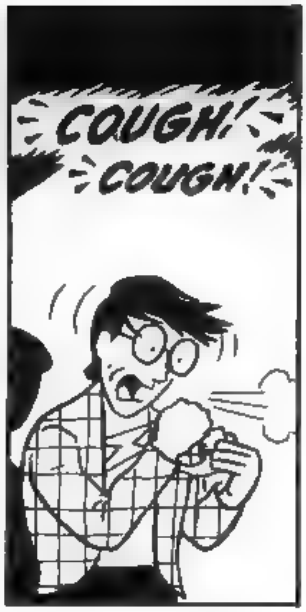
IN FACT, WHAT WE'RE SEEING IN THE *LIVING LINES* OF THESE PICTURES IS *THE PRIMORDIAL STUFF* FROM WHICH A *FORMALIZED LANGUAGE* CAN ***EVOLVE!***

I'LL GIVE YOU AN *EXAMPLE.*

LET'S SAY I WANTED TO SMOKE THIS *PIPE*--

--ASSUMING IT ***IS*** A PIPE--

--AND I LIT IT WITH A MATCH LIKE *SO:*

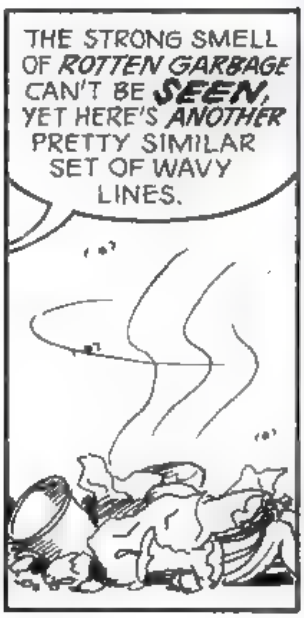

COUGH!
COUGH!

NOW, YOU'LL NOTICE
COUGH! AHEM!
YOU'LL NOTICE A FEW WAVY LINES RISING FROM THE PIPE

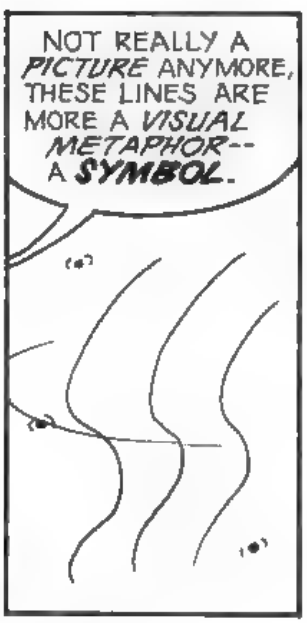
THIS IS THE ARTIST'S CARTOONY WAY OF TELLING YOU THERE'S SMOKE COMING FROM THE PIPE. YOU'VE ALL SEEN IT BEFORE, RIGHT?

NOW, LET'S SUPPOSE THAT MY PIPE AND I HAVE GONE FOR A LITTLE WALK--

--AND COME ACROSS AN OVERTURNED GARBAGE CAN

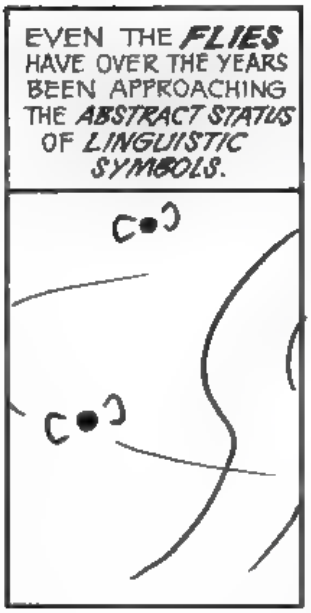

THE STRONG SMELL OF ROTTEN GARBAGE CAN'T BE SEEN, YET HERE'S ANOTHER PRETTY SIMILAR SET OF WAVY LINES.

DESPITE THEIR SUPERFICIAL RESEMBLANCE, THESE ARE TWO VERY DIFFERENT SETS OF LINES. ONE REPRESENTS A VISIBLE PHENOMENON, SMOKE, WHILE THE OTHER REPRESENTS AN INVISIBLE ONE, OUR SENSE OF SMELL.


NOT REALLY A PICTURE ANYMORE, THESE LINES ARE MORE A VISUAL METAPHOR-- A SYMBOL.

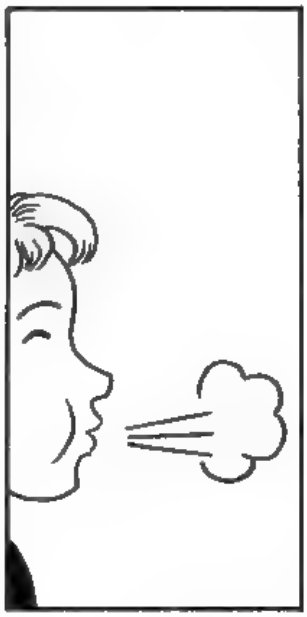
AND SYMBOLS ARE THE BASIS OF LANGUAGE!

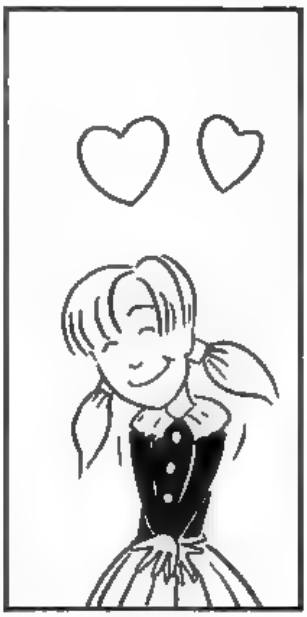
TAKEN OUT OF THEIR *ORIGINAL CONTEXT*, THEY CAN NOW BE APPLIED *ANYWHERE* AND THE READER WILL INSTANTLY KNOW WHAT THEY MEAN.

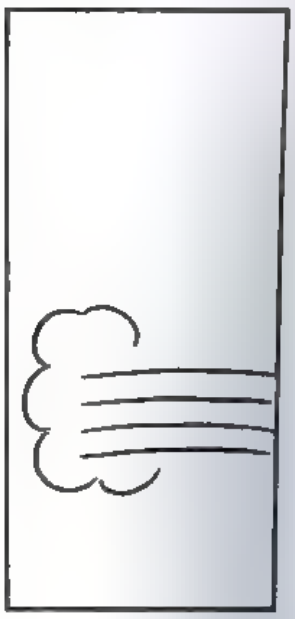

EVEN THE *FLIES* HAVE OVER THE YEARS BEEN APPROACHING THE *ABSTRACT STATUS* OF *LINGUISTIC SYMBOLS*.

WHENEVER AN ARTIST INVENTS A NEW WAY TO *REPRESENT THE INVISIBLE*, THERE IS ALWAYS A CHANCE THAT IT WILL BE *PICKED UP* BY *OTHER* ARTISTS.

IF ENOUGH ARTISTS BEGIN *USING* THE SYMBOL, IT WILL ENTER THE LANGUAGE FOR *GOOD*--
--AS MANY *HAVE* THROUGH THE YEARS







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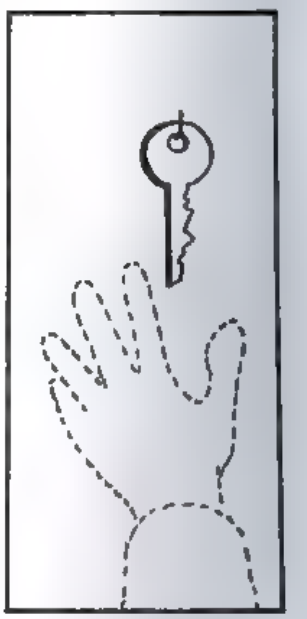
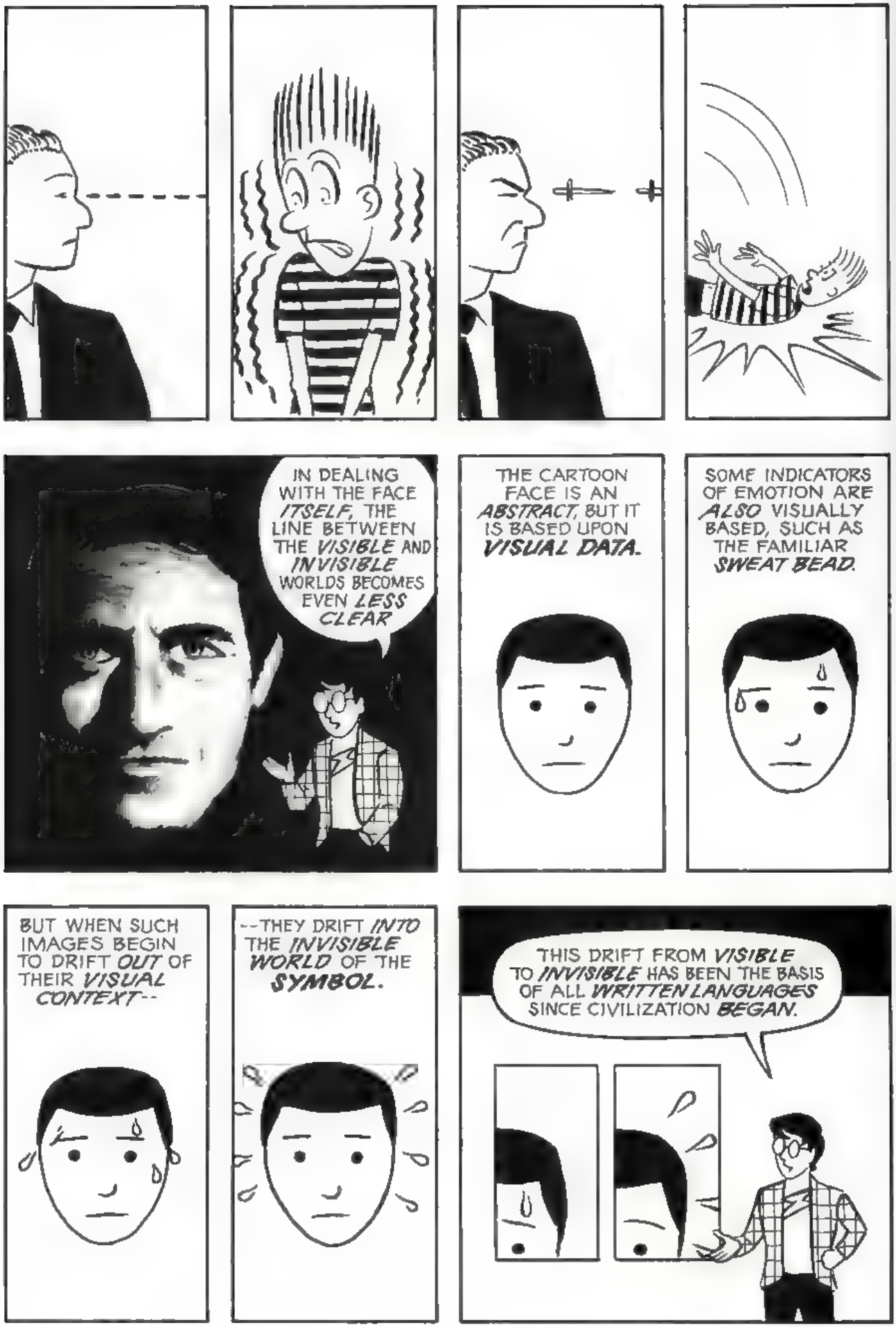


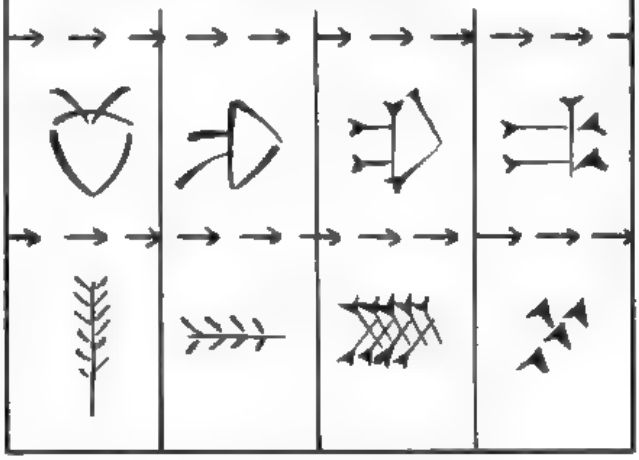

IN DEALING WITH THE FACE *ITSELF*, THE LINE BETWEEN THE *VISIBLE* AND *INVISIBLE* WORLDS BECOMES EVEN *LESS CLEAR*
THE CARTOON FACE IS AN *ABSTRACT*, BUT IT IS BASED UPON *VISUAL DATA*.
SOME INDICATORS OF EMOTION ARE *ALSO* VISUALLY BASED, SUCH AS THE FAMILIAR *SWEAT BEAD*.
BUT WHEN SUCH IMAGES BEGIN TO DRIFT *OUT* OF THEIR *VISUAL CONTEXT*--
--THEY DRIFT *INTO* THE *INVISIBLE WORLD* OF THE *SYMBOL*.
THIS DRIFT FROM *VISIBLE* TO *INVISIBLE* HAS BEEN THE BASIS OF ALL *WRITTEN LANGUAGES* SINCE CIVILIZATION *BEGAN*.

SUMERIANS IN ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA GOT THINGS ROLLING OVER *5,000 YEARS AGO* WHEN A NEED WAS FOUND TO RECORD CERTAIN *COMMODITIES.*

OK

GRAIN

THESE FIRST SYMBOLS -- *CARTOONS,* REALLY -- GRADUALLY EVOLVED AWAY FROM *ANY* RESEMBLANCE TO THEIR SUBJECT, TOWARD THE HIGHLY ABSTRACTED FORMS OF MODERN LANGUAGES...



...AND *EVENTUALLY* TO OUR *TOTALLY* ABSTRACT *SOUND-BASED* SYSTEM.

THE LONGER ANY FORM OF ART OR COMMUNICATION EXISTS, THE MORE *SYMBOLS* IT ACCUMULATES.

THE MODERN COMIC IS A YOUNG LANGUAGE, BUT IT ALREADY HAS AN *IMPRESSIVE ARRAY* OF *RECOGNIZABLE SYMBOLS.*

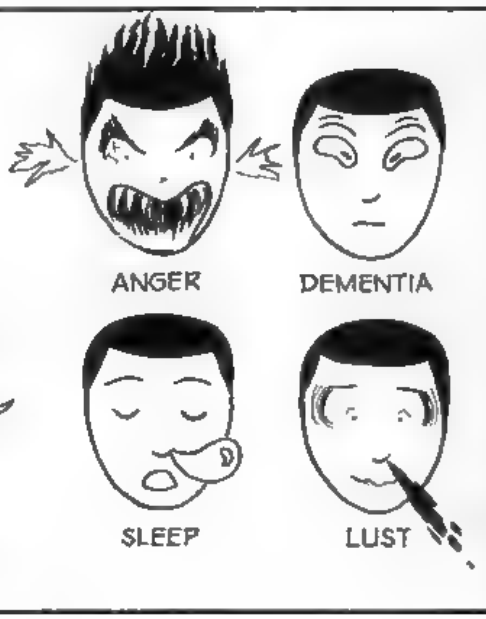
AND THIS *VISUAL VOCABULARY* HAS AN *UNLIMITED POTENTIAL* FOR *GROWTH.*

WITHIN A GIVEN CULTURE THESE SYMBOLS WILL QUICKLY SPREAD UNTIL EVERYBODY KNOWS THEM AT A GLANCE

BUT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A LANGUAGE EVOLVES IN MORE THAN ONE DISTINCT CULTURE AT A TIME?

THE ANSWER, OF COURSE, IS THAT MORE THAN ONE SET OF SYMBOLS WILL EVOLVE!

SO IT WAS, ONCE AGAIN, IN *JAPAN* WHERE COMICS DEVELOPED FOR *YEARS* IN RELATIVE *ISOLATION* FROM THEIR WESTERN COUSINS.



ANGER

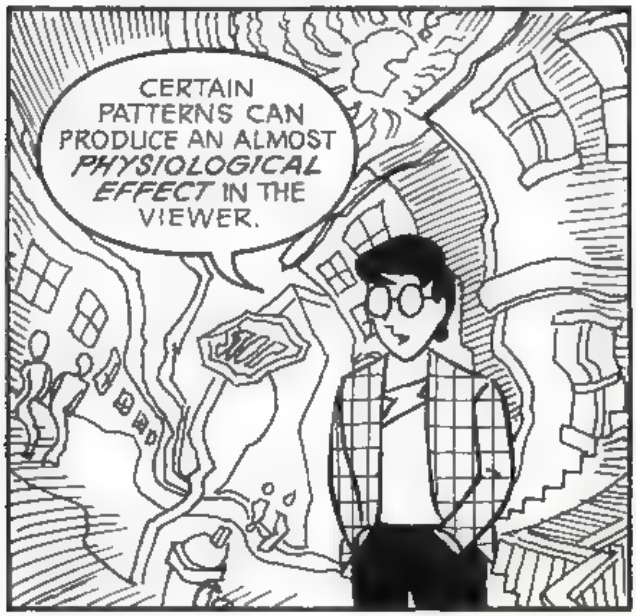
DEMENTIA

SLEEP

LUST

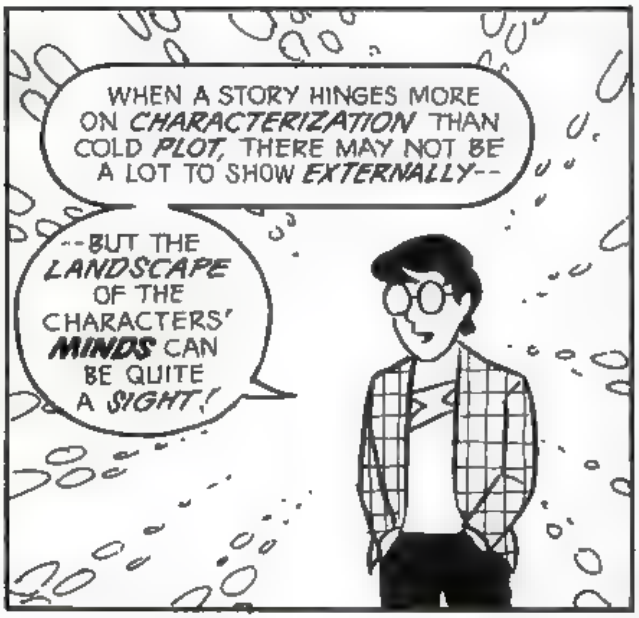
BACKGROUNDS CAN BE ANOTHER VALUABLE TOOL FOR INDICATING INVISIBLE IDEAS... PARTICULARLY THE WORLD OF EMOTIONS.

EVEN WHEN THERE IS LITTLE OR NO DISTORTION OF THE CHARACTERS IN A GIVEN SCENE, A DISTORTED OR EXPRESSIONISTIC BACKGROUND WILL USUALLY AFFECT OUR "READING" OF CHARACTERS' INNER STATES.


CERTAIN PATTERNS CAN PRODUCE AN ALMOST PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECT IN THE VIEWER.

BUT FOR SOME REASON, READERS WILL ASCRIBE THOSE FEELINGS, NOT TO THEMSELVES, BUT TO THE CHARACTERS THEY IDENTIFY WITH

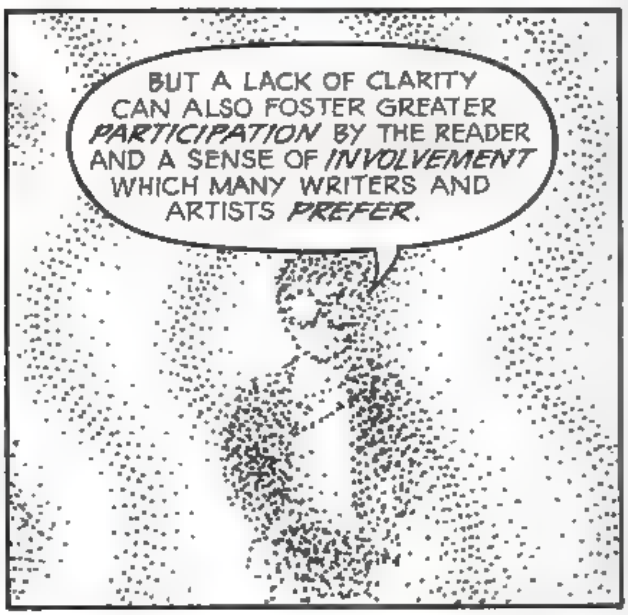
SUCH INTERNAL EFFECTS ARE, OF COURSE, BEST SUITED TO STORIES ABOUT INTERNAL MATTERS.


WHEN A STORY HINGES MORE ON CHARACTERIZATION THAN COLD PLOT, THERE MAY NOT BE A LOT TO SHOW EXTERNALLY--
--BUT THE LANDSCAPE OF THE CHARACTERS' MINDS CAN BE QUITE A SIGHT!

THIS PRINCIPLE IS EVIDENT IN MANY EUROPEAN COLOR COMICS AND IN JAPANESE ROMANCE COMICS WHERE EXPRESSIONISTIC EFFECTS HAVE BEEN DEVISED FOR ALMOST ANY EMOTION IMAGINABLE!
ねえ！ 連れてってくれるんでしょ!?
……
へへへ

SEE PAGE 216 FOR COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

EXPRESSIONISM AND SYNAESTHETICS ARE DISTORTIVE BY THEIR NATURE. IF STRONG ENOUGH, THEIR EFFECTS CAN OBSCURE THEIR SUBJECTS.


BUT A LACK OF CLARITY CAN ALSO FOSTER GREATER PARTICIPATION BY THE READER AND A SENSE OF INVOLVEMENT WHICH MANY WRITERS AND ARTISTS PREFER.

BY FAR, THE MOST *WIDELY-USED*, MOST COMPLEX AND MOST *VERSATILE* OF COMICS' MANY SYNAESTHETIC ICONS IS THE *EVER-PRESENT, EVER-POPULAR* **WORD BALLOON!**

OVER THE YEARS, COMICS CREATORS HAVE STRUGGLED WITH DOZENS OF VARIATIONS IN THEIR DESPERATE ATTEMPTS* TO DEPICT *SOUND* IN A STRICTLY *VISUAL MEDIUM.*

VARIATIONS IN BALLOON SHAPE ARE *MANY* AND NEW ONES ARE BEING INVENTED EVERY DAY.

I WILL BE--

AAARH!

HEE HEE HEE HEE HEE

IT'S SO *QUIET!*

ZACHA

OH, IT'S *YOU.*

**TIMBER!!**

WHILE *INSIDE* THOSE BALLOONS, SYMBOLS ARE CONSTANTLY BEING APPROPRIATED OR EVEN *INVENTED* TO COVER THE *NON-VERBAL.*

ZZZZ ZZZZ

?

@#☆!@?!

....

EVEN THE VARIATIONS OF LETTERING *STYLES,* BOTH IN AND OUT OF BALLOONS, SPEAK OF AN *ONGOING STRUGGLE* TO CAPTURE THE VERY *ESSENCE* OF SOUND

CRASH!

tip! tip!

*MAAY-BEE* I DON'T EVEN **WANT** SHRIMP FOR DINNER!

!!briing!!!!

WHUMP!

HA-HA!

*La Dee Dee Dee Da...*

KRAK!

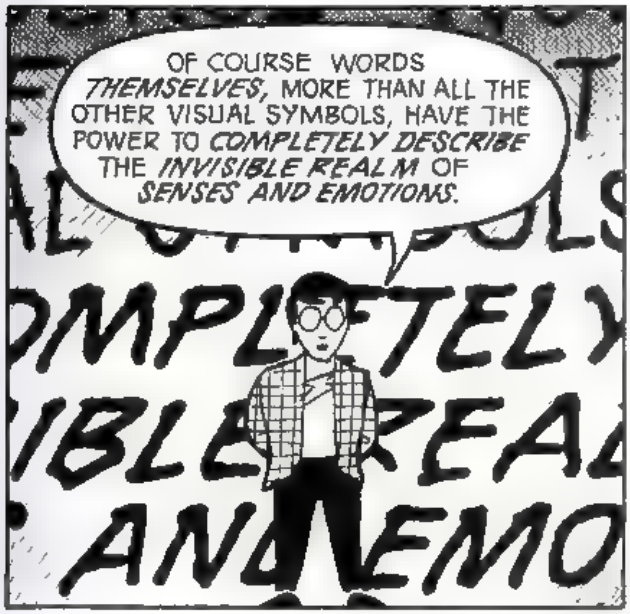
KLIK!

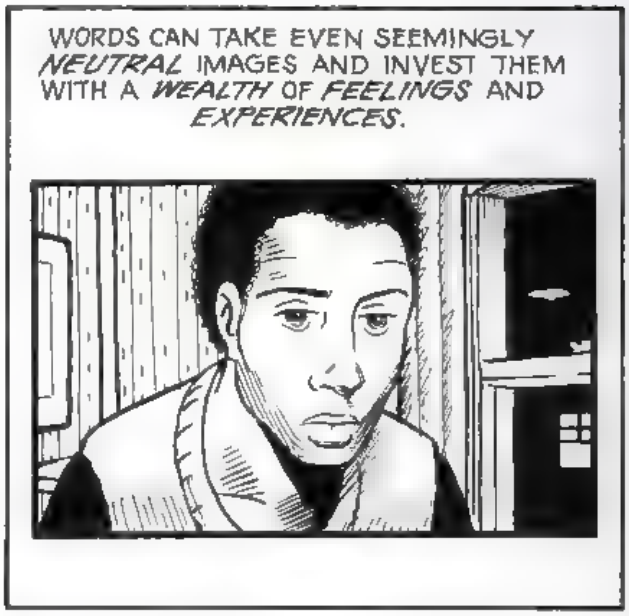
SSSSSSSSSSS

AND AS FOR THE ESSENCE OF *THOUGHT...*



* EISNER DESCRIBES THE WORD BALLOON AS A "DESPERATION DEVICE."


OF COURSE WORDS *THEMSELVES*, MORE THAN ALL THE OTHER VISUAL SYMBOLS, HAVE THE POWER TO *COMPLETELY DESCRIBE* THE *INVISIBLE REALM* OF *SENSES AND EMOTIONS*.

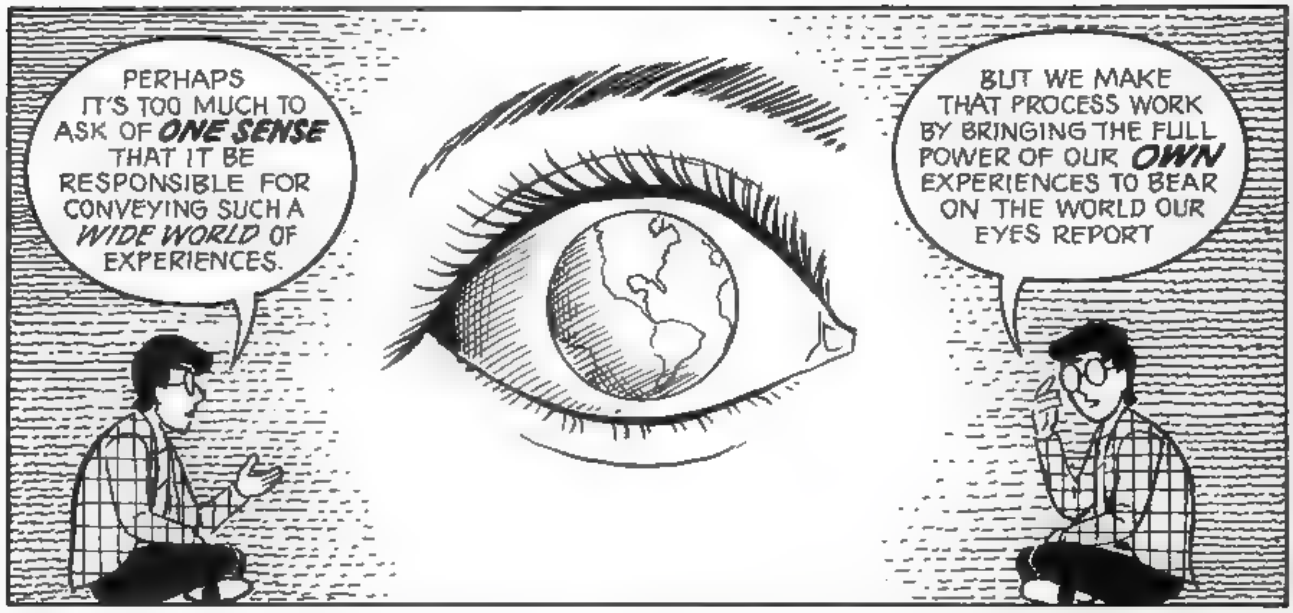

WORDS CAN TAKE EVEN SEEMINGLY *NEUTRAL* IMAGES AND INVEST THEM WITH A *WEALTH* OF *FEELINGS* AND *EXPERIENCES*.

I SAT BY THE OPEN WINDOW, HOPING TO CATCH A WHIFF OF THE OLD CHARCOAL GRILLS. FROM NEXT DOOR CAME THE OTHERWORLDLY HUM OF TELEVISION. THE OLD CLOCK STRUCK A LAZY EIGHT

AS NOTED, PICTURES CAN INDUCE *STRONG FEELINGS* IN THE READER, BUT THEY CAN ALSO LACK THE *SPECIFICITY* OF WORDS.

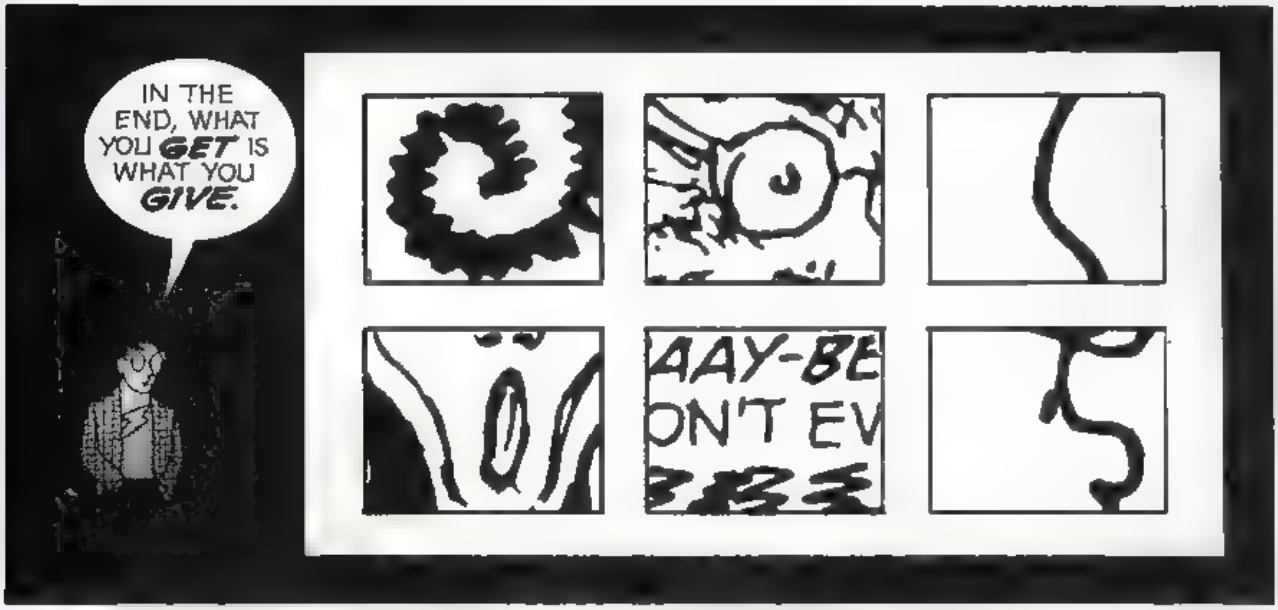
WORDS, ON THE OTHER HAND, OFFER THAT SPECIFICITY, BUT CAN LACK THE IMMEDIATE EMOTIONAL CHARGE OF PICTURES, RELYING INSTEAD ON A GRADUAL *CUMULATIVE* EFFECT.
I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT I'M ON TO YOUR PLOT... I KNOW YOU PUT SOMETHING IN MY DOG'S FOOD THAT MADE HIM NOT LOVE ME ANYMORE AND...

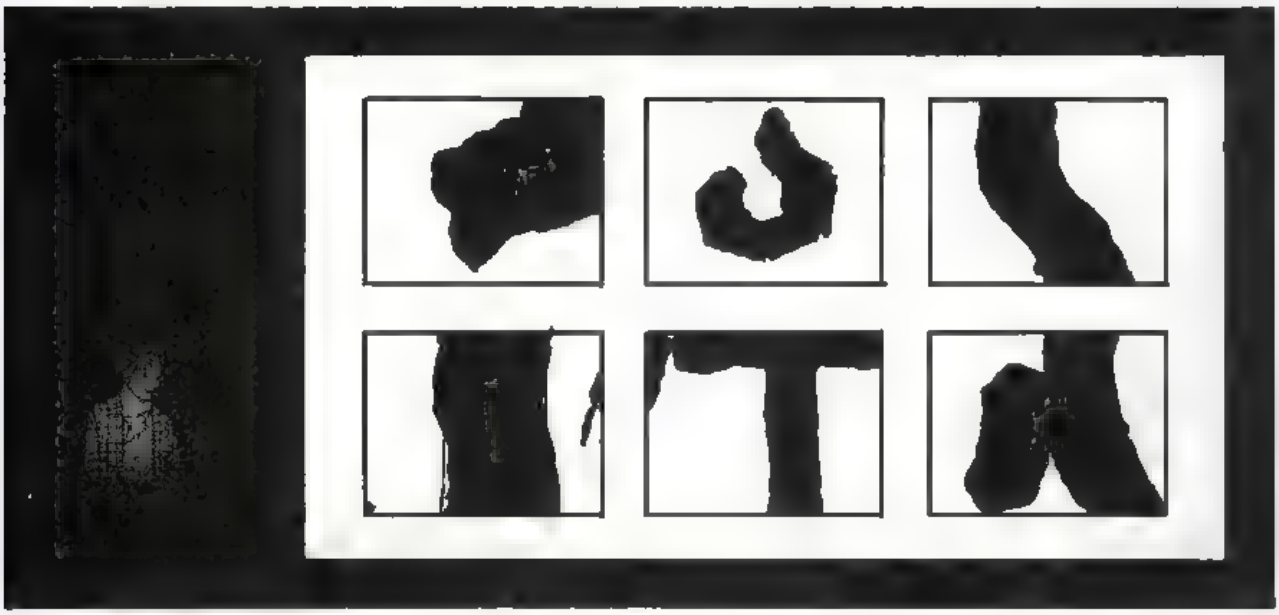
*TOGETHER*, OF COURSE, WORDS AND PICTURES CAN WORK MIRACLES.
BUT WE'LL GET TO THAT IN THE *NEXT CHAPTER*.


PERHAPS IT'S TOO MUCH TO ASK OF ONE SENSE THAT IT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR CONVEYING SUCH A WIDE WORLD OF EXPERIENCES.
BUT WE MAKE THAT PROCESS WORK BY BRINGING THE FULL POWER OF OUR OWN EXPERIENCES TO BEAR ON THE WORLD OUR EYES REPORT

IN THIS CHAPTER, WE'VE DEALT WITH THE INVISIBLE WORLDS OF SENSES AND EMOTIONS, BUT IN FACT ALL ASPECTS OF COMICS SHOW IT TO BE AN ART OF THE INVISIBLE.
MAAY-BEE I DON'T EVEN WANT SHRIMP FOR DINNER!

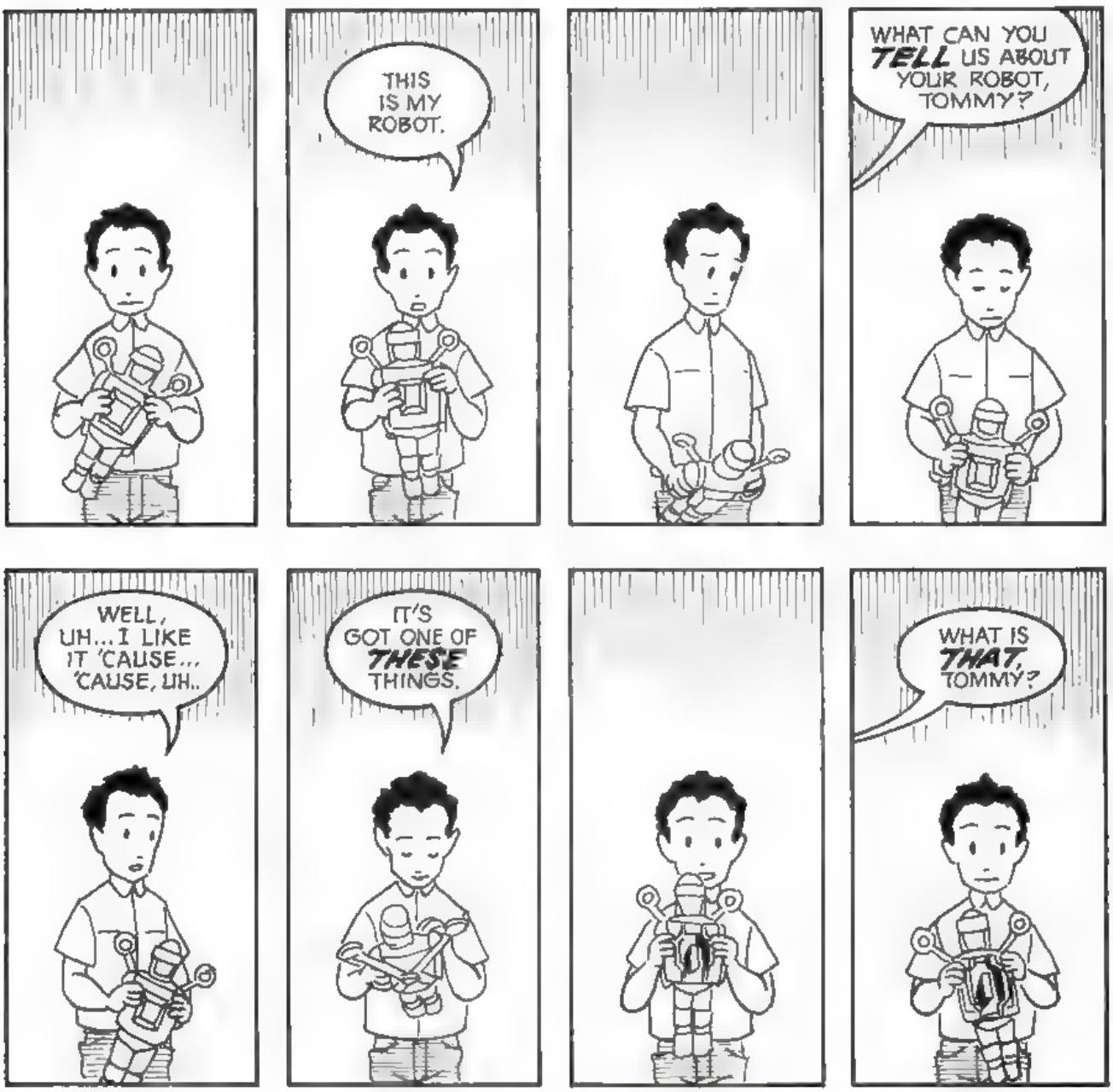
WHAT YOU SEE IS SELDOM WHAT YOU GET IF ALL YOU'RE SEEING (SEEING EVEN NOW) IS JUST INK AND PAPER.
MAAY-BEE I DON'T EVEN


IN THE END, WHAT YOU GET IS WHAT YOU GIVE.
AAY-BE
ON'T EV



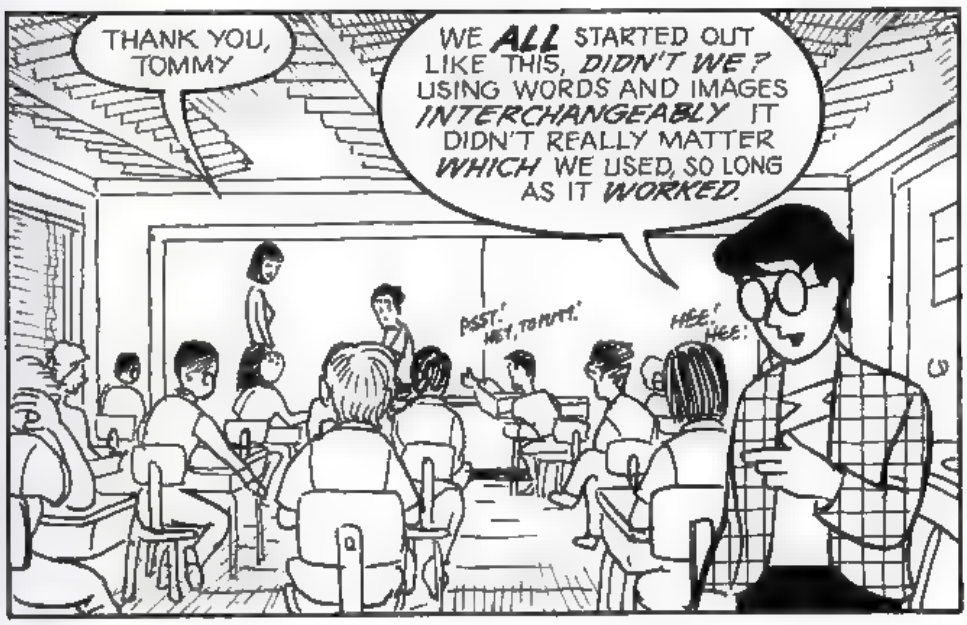
# CHAPTER SIX

## SHOW AND TELL.


THIS IS MY ROBOT.
WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR ROBOT, TOMMY?
WELL, UH... I LIKE IT 'CAUSE... 'CAUSE, UH..
IT'S GOT ONE OF THESE THINGS.
WHAT IS THAT, TOMMY?

IT'S THIS THING AND IF YOU PULL IT, IT GOES LIKE THIS.
KLUNK!
THE HEAD FLIPS BACK
...?
YEAH.

AND... AND THEN YOU CAN DO THIS AND IT GOES UP AND YOU FLIP THIS.
I DID IT WRONG. WAIT.
LOOK, IT'S A AIRPLANE NOW!


THANK YOU, TOMMY
WE ALL STARTED OUT LIKE THIS, DIDN'T WE? USING WORDS AND IMAGES INTERCHANGEABLY IT DIDN'T REALLY MATTER WHICH WE USED, SO LONG AS IT WORKED.
PSST! HEY, TOMMY!
HEE! HEE!

IT'S CONSIDERED NORMAL IN THIS SOCIETY FOR CHILDREN TO COMBINE WORDS AND PICTURES, SO LONG AS THEY GROW OUT OF IT.
Tommy

TRADITIONAL THINKING HAS LONG HELD THAT TRULY GREAT WORKS OF ART AND LITERATURE ARE ONLY POSSIBLE WHEN THE TWO ARE KEPT AT ARM'S LENGTH
THE GRAPES OF WRATH
GREAT EXPECTATIONS
HOLY BIBLE
THE THEBAN PLAYS
WAR AND PEACE
TOLSTOY
LOOK HOMEWARD ANGEL
TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD
HARPER LEE

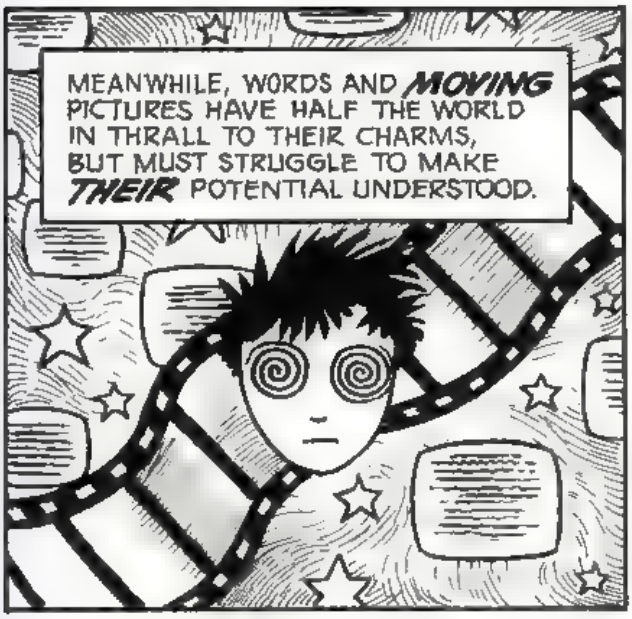
WORDS AND PICTURES TOGETHER ARE CONSIDERED, AT BEST, A DIVERSION FOR THE MASSES, AT WORST A PRODUCT OF CRASS COMMERCIALISM.
Greetings from Hobo
FTD
Kool A.d
MILK BONE
Small Dog
BATMAN
RETURNS
BRAWN
PRINTS
Peop
OVER
QUAKER OATS
CAPN CRUNCH
PEANUT BUTTER
CRUNCH
ARE YOU HUNGRY TONIGHT?
NEWS
HOME ALONE

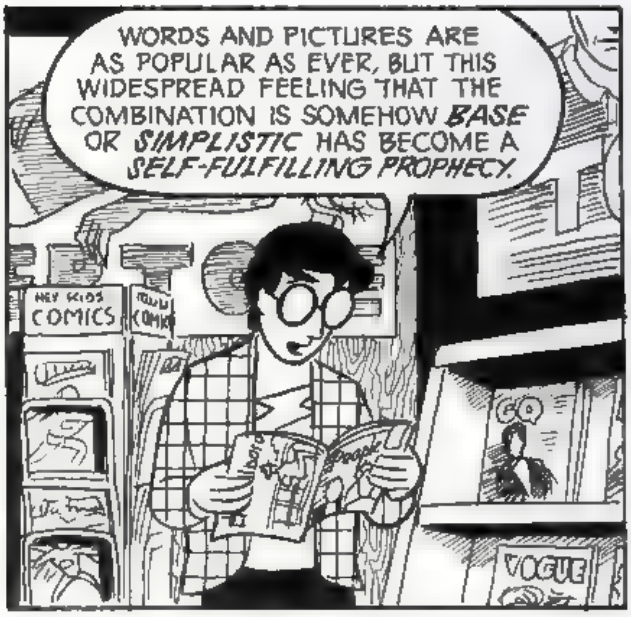
AS CHILDREN, OUR FIRST BOOKS HAD PICTURES GALORE AND VERY FEW WORDS BECAUSE THAT WAS "EASIER"
WALLY

THEN, AS WE GREW, WE WERE EXPECTED TO GRADUATE TO BOOKS WITH MUCH MORE TEXT AND ONLY OCCASIONAL PICTURES --

--AND FINALLY TO ARRIVE AT "REAL" BOOKS -- THOSE WITH NO PICTURES AT ALL.

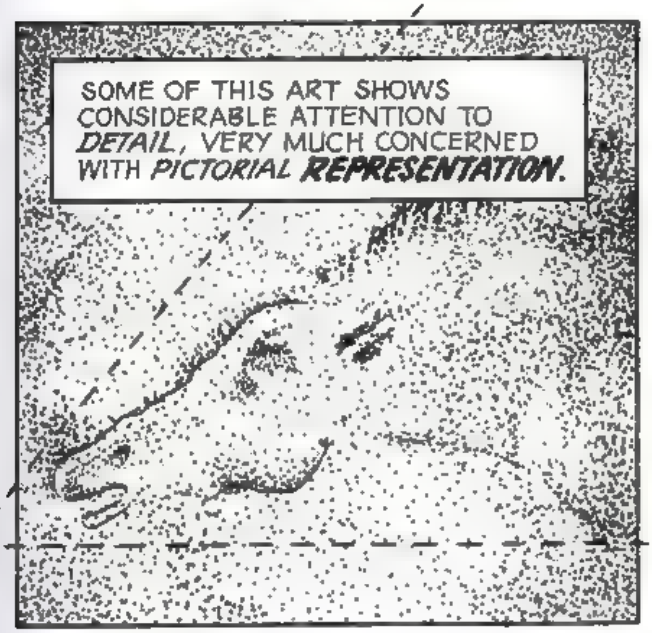
OR PERHAPS, AS IS SADLY THE CASE THESE DAYS, TO NO BOOKS AT ALL


MEANWHILE, WORDS AND MOVING PICTURES HAVE HALF THE WORLD IN THRALL TO THEIR CHARMS, BUT MUST STRUGGLE TO MAKE THEIR POTENTIAL UNDERSTOOD.

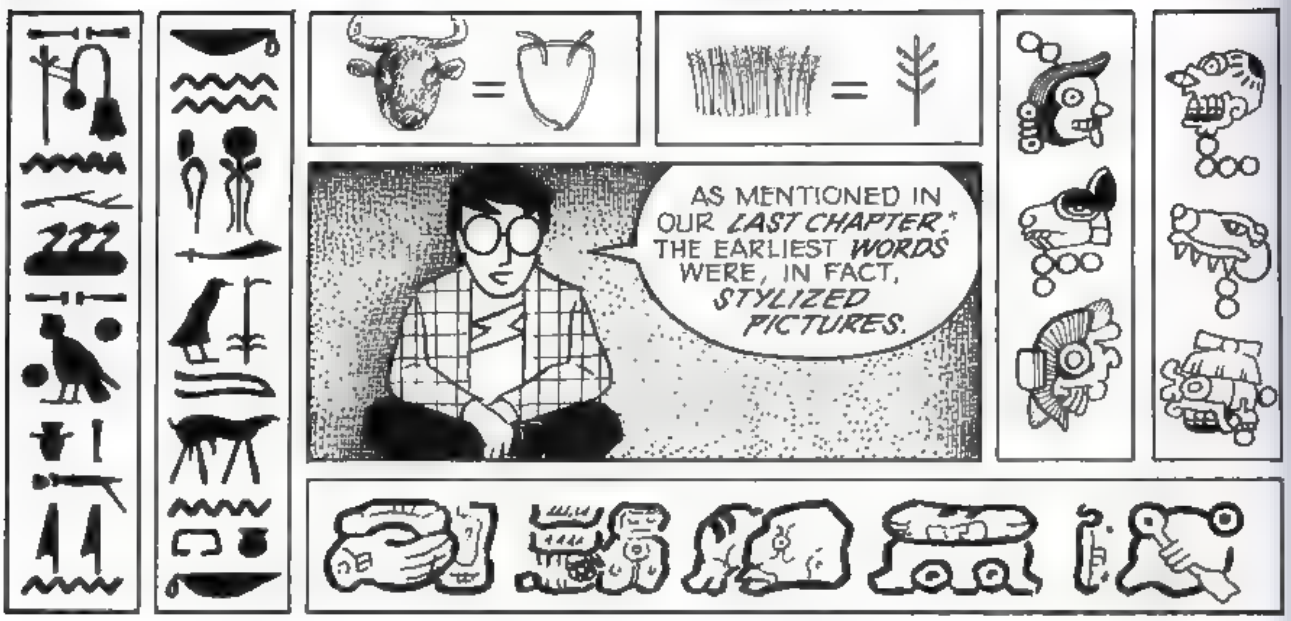

WORDS AND PICTURES ARE AS POPULAR AS EVER, BUT THIS WIDESPREAD FEELING THAT THE COMBINATION IS SOMEHOW BASE OR SIMPLISTIC HAS BECOME A SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY.
COMICS
VOGUE

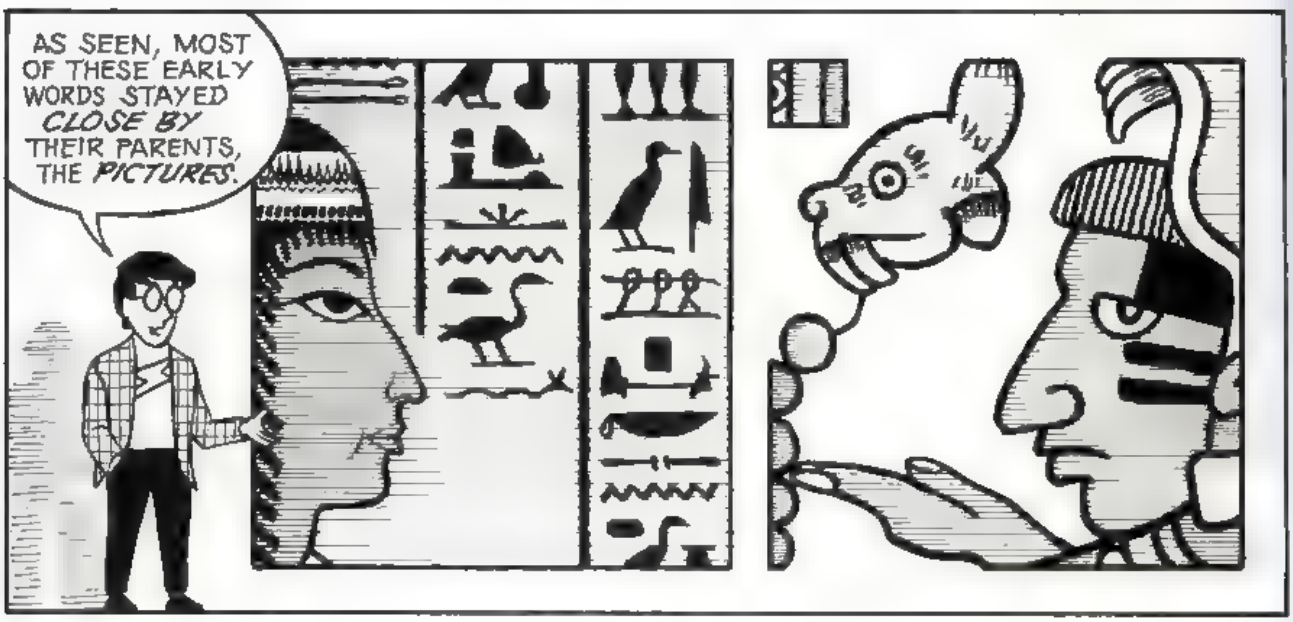
THE ROOTS OF THIS ATTITUDE RUN PRETTY DEEP.

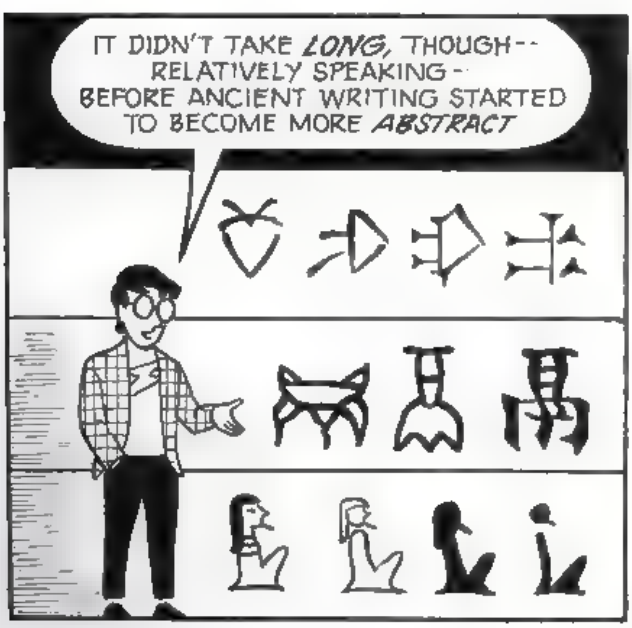
AS NEAR AS WE CAN TELL, PICTURES PREDATE THE WRITTEN WORD BY A LARGE MARGIN. HERE ARE SOME BIG HITS FROM THE GOLDEN AGE OF CAVE PAINTING, ABOUT 15,000 YEARS AGO.


SOME OF THIS ART SHOWS CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION TO DETAIL, VERY MUCH CONCERNED WITH PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION.

BUT OTHERS WERE VERY ICONIC, ACTING AS SYMBOLS RATHER THAN PICTURES -- MORE LIKE A PRIMITIVE LANGUAGE!


AS MENTIONED IN OUR *LAST CHAPTER*,* THE EARLIEST *WORDS* WERE, IN FACT, *STYLIZED PICTURES*.

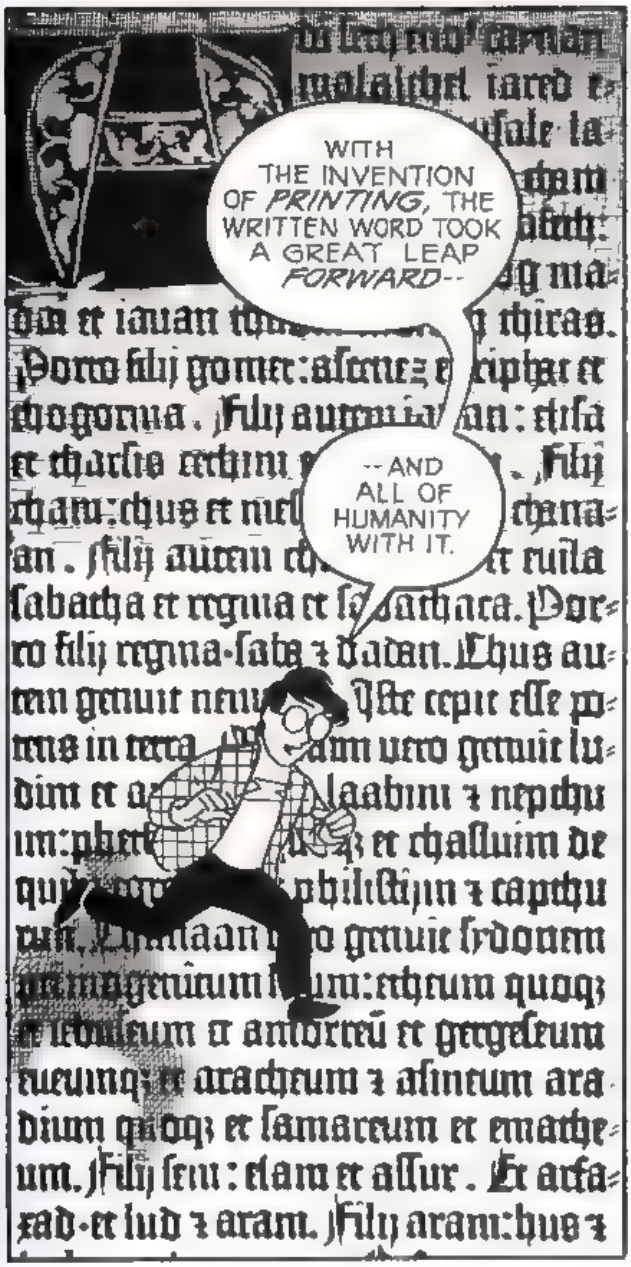

AS SEEN, MOST OF THESE EARLY WORDS STAYED *CLOSE BY* THEIR PARENTS, THE *PICTURES*.


IT DIDN'T TAKE *LONG*, THOUGH-- RELATIVELY SPEAKING-- BEFORE ANCIENT WRITING STARTED TO BECOME MORE *ABSTRACT*

*SOME* WRITTEN LANGUAGES SURVIVE TO THIS DAY, BEARING TRACES OF THEIR ANCIENT PICTORIAL HERITAGE

* SEE PAGE 129.

BUT, IN TIME, MOST MODERN WRITING WOULD COME TO REPRESENT *SOUND* ***ONLY*** AND LOSE ANY LINGERING RESEMBLANCE TO THE *VISIBLE WORLD.*
re's M re! Order Today and receive FREE G



*IN ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS, FOR EXAMPLE.

MORE *IMPORTANTLY*, WHEN THEY ***WERE*** COMBINED, AS IN THIS *GERMAN* COMIC FROM THE 1400's, WORDS AND PICTURES STAYED *SEPARATE*, REFUSING TO *MIX*-- LIKE *OIL AND WATER*.

THE WRITTEN WORD WAS BECOMING MORE *SPECIALIZED*, MORE *ABSTRACT*, MORE *ELABORATE*--

--AND LESS AND LESS LIKE *PICTURES*.

***PICTURES***, MEANWHILE, BEGAN TO GROW IN THE *OPPOSITE* DIRECTION · LESS *ABSTRACT* OR *SYMBOLIC*, MORE *REPRESENTATIONAL* AND *SPECIFIC*

FACSIMILE DETAILS OF PORTRAITS BY DURER (1519) REMBRANDT (1660) DAVID (1788) AND INGRES (1810-15)

John Keats 1819

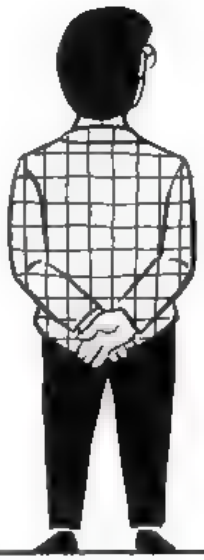
*Ode on a Grecian Urn*

1

*Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,*
*Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,*
*Sylvan historian, who canst thus express*
*A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:*
*What leaf fring'd legend haunts about thy shape*
*Of deities or mortals, or of both,*
*In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?*
*What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?*
*What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?*
*What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?*

BY THE EARLY 1800's, WESTERN ART AND WRITING HAD DRIFTED ABOUT AS FAR APART AS WAS *POSSIBLE*.

ONE WAS OBSESSED WITH *RESEMBLANCE, LIGHT* AND *COLOR*, ALL THINGS ***VISIBLE***...



.. THE *OTHER* RICH IN ***INVISIBLE*** *TREASURES, SENSES, EMOTIONS, SPIRITUALITY, PHILOSOPHY*...

FACSIMILE OF JEAN-BAPTISTE-CAMILLE COROT'S "A VIEW NEAR VOLTERRA"(1838).

FIRST STANZA OF KEATS' POEM.

PICTURES AND WORDS, ONCE *TOGETHER* IN THE CENTER OF OUR ICONIC ABSTRACTION CHART, HAVE AT *THIS* POINT *DRIFTED* TO *OPPOSITE CORNERS*.

IN A WAY, PICTURES AND WORDS HAD REACHED THE END OF A *5,000 YEAR JOURNEY.* IF THEY WERE TO *CONTINUE* MOVING, WHERE COULD THEY GO?

PICTURE PLANE

P

W

RESEMBLANCE

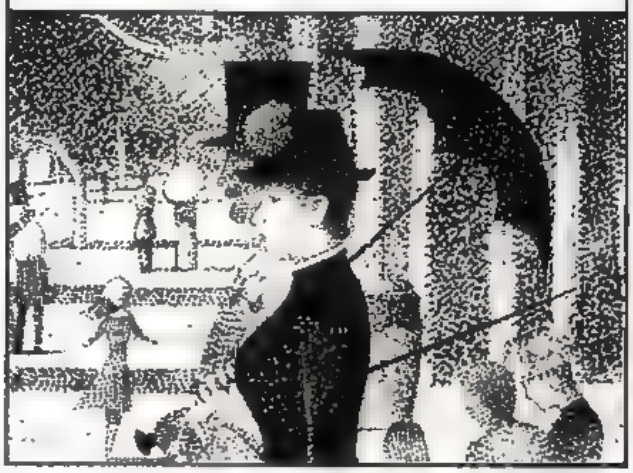
MEANING

FOR *PICTURES,* THERE WAS ONLY ***UP!***

*IMPRESSIONISM* SENT WESTERN ART TOWARD THE *ABSTRACT VERTEX,* BUT IN A WAY THAT *CLUNG* TO WHAT THE *EYE* SAW.

P

IMPRESSIONISM, WHILE IT COULD BE THOUGHT OF AS THE FIRST ***MODERN*** MOVEMENT, WAS MORE A *CULMINATION* OF THE ***OLD,*** THE *ULTIMATE STUDY* OF *LIGHT AND COLOR.*



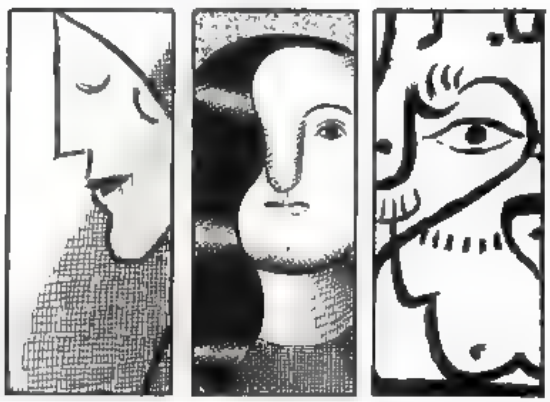
FACSIMILE DETAIL OF "A SUNDAY AFTERNOON ON THE ISLAND OF LA GRANDE JATTE" BY GEORGES SEURAT

SOON AFTER CAME THE ***EXPLOSION!*** EXPRESSIONISM, FUTURISM, DADA, SURREALISM, FAUVISM, CUBISM, ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM, NEO-PLASTICISM, CONSTRUCTIVISM.

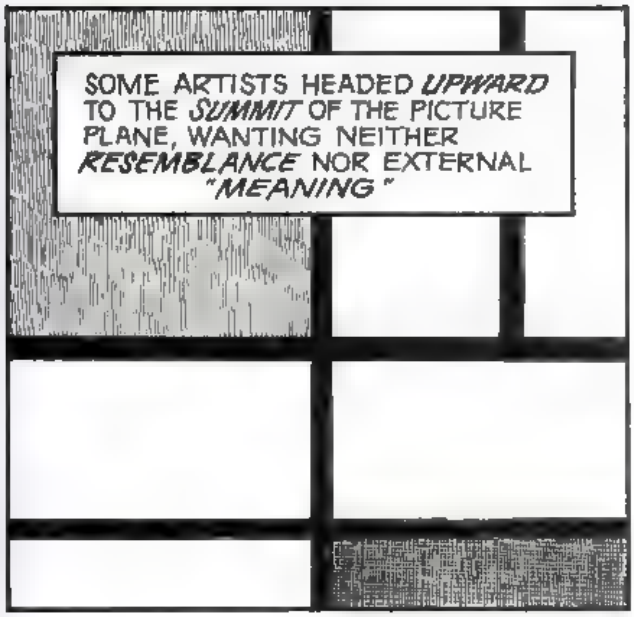
EVERY WHICH WAY BUT ***BACKWARDS!***

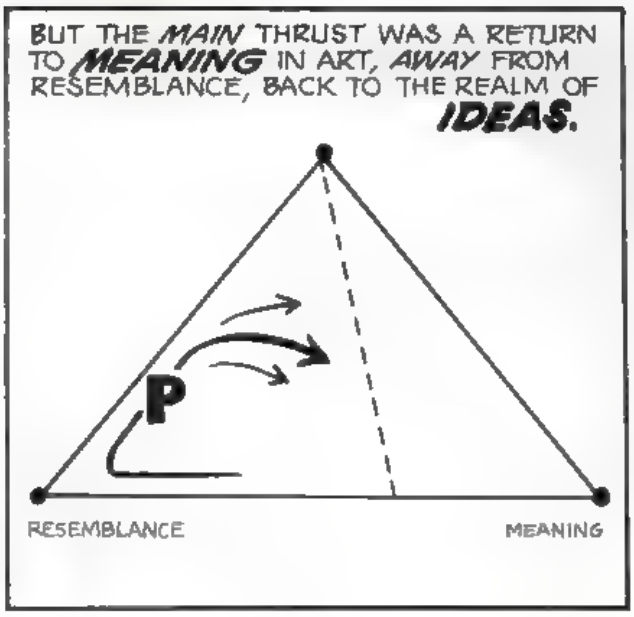
P

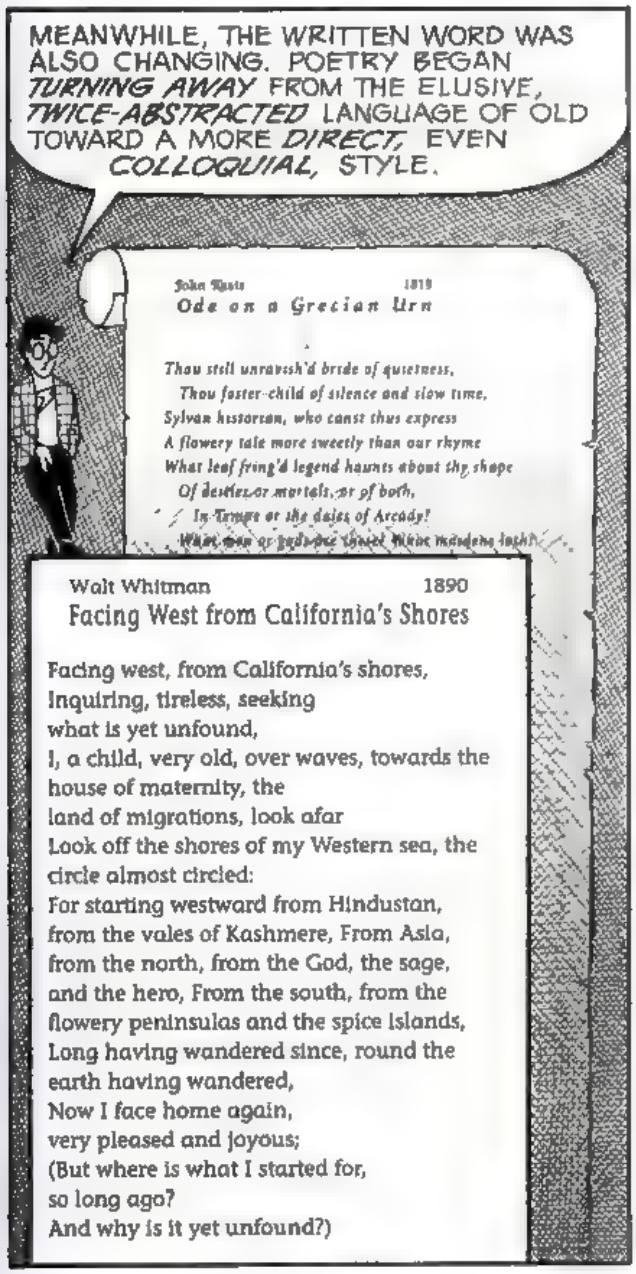
STRICT REPRESENTATIONAL STYLES WERE OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE TO THE NEW SCHOOLS. *ABSTRACTION,* BOTH ICONIC AND *NON*-ICONIC MADE A SPECTACULAR *COMEBACK!*



FACSIMILE DETAILS OF PORTRAITS BY PICASSO, LEGER AND KLEE


SOME ARTISTS HEADED *UPWARD* TO THE *SUMMIT* OF THE PICTURE PLANE, WANTING NEITHER *RESEMBLANCE* NOR EXTERNAL *"MEANING"*
MONDRIAN A LA McCLOUD


BUT THE *MAIN* THRUST WAS A RETURN TO *MEANING* IN ART, *AWAY* FROM RESEMBLANCE, BACK TO THE REALM OF *IDEAS.*
P
RESEMBLANCE
MEANING

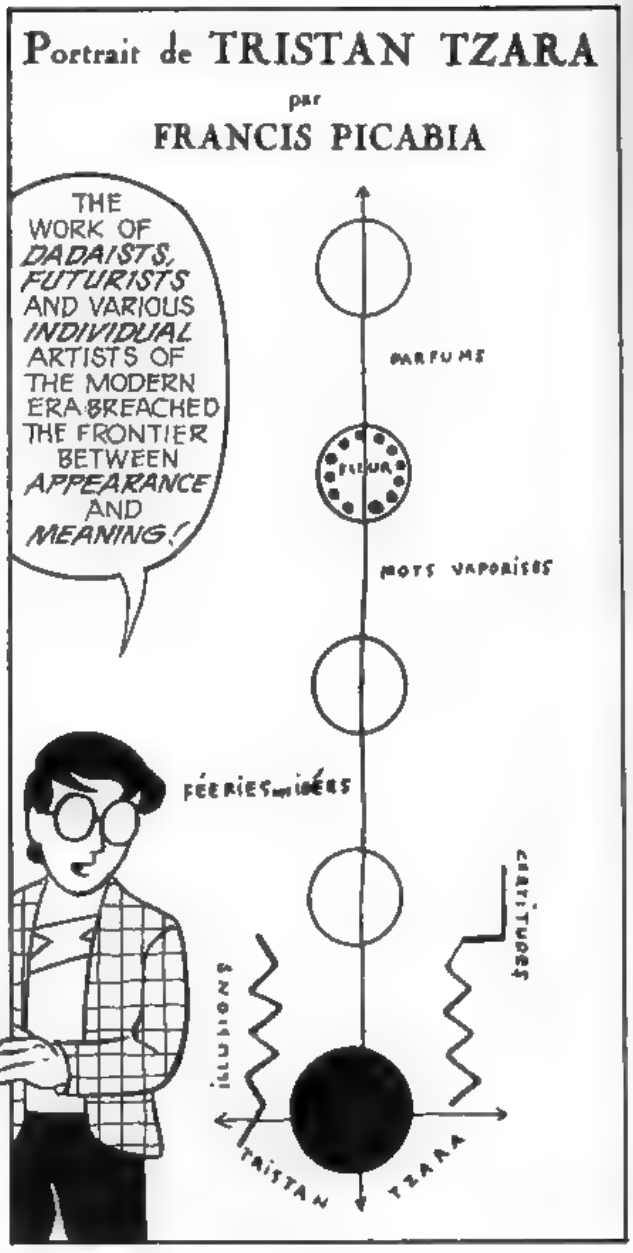

MEANWHILE, THE WRITTEN WORD WAS ALSO CHANGING. POETRY BEGAN *TURNING AWAY* FROM THE ELUSIVE, *TWICE-ABSTRACTED* LANGUAGE OF OLD TOWARD A MORE *DIRECT,* EVEN *COLLOQUIAL,* STYLE.
John Keats 1819
*Ode on a Grecian Urn*
*Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,*
*Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,*
*Sylvan historian, who canst thus express*
*A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme*
*What leaf fring'd legend haunts about thy shape*
*Of deities or mortals, or of both,*
*In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?*
*What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?*
Walt Whitman 1890
Facing West from California's Shores
Facing west, from California's shores,
Inquiring, tireless, seeking
what is yet unfound,
I, a child, very old, over waves, towards the
house of maternity, the
land of migrations, look afar
Look off the shores of my Western sea, the
circle almost circled:
For starting westward from Hindustan,
from the vales of Kashmere, From Asia,
from the north, from the God, the sage,
and the hero, From the south, from the
flowery peninsulas and the spice islands,
Long having wandered since, round the
earth having wandered,
Now I face home again,
very pleased and joyous;
(But where is what I started for,
so long ago?
And why is it yet unfound?)

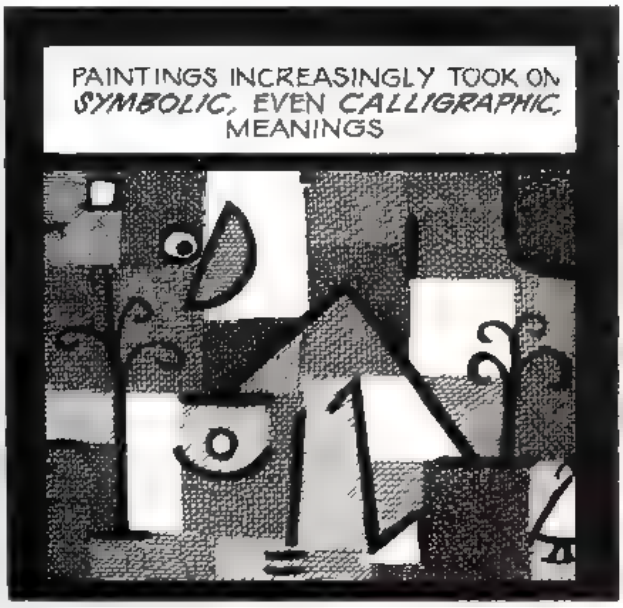
IN PROSE, LANGUAGE WAS BECOMING EVEN MORE DIRECT, CONVEYING MEANING *SIMPLY* AND *QUICKLY,* MORE LIKE *PICTURES.*

"MEANING" WAS NOT *ABANDONED* BY *ANY MEANS,* BUT AUTHORS WERE DEFINITELY MOVING *LEFT*--
W

--AND HEADED FOR A *COLLISION!*
P
W
RESEMBLANCE
MEANING

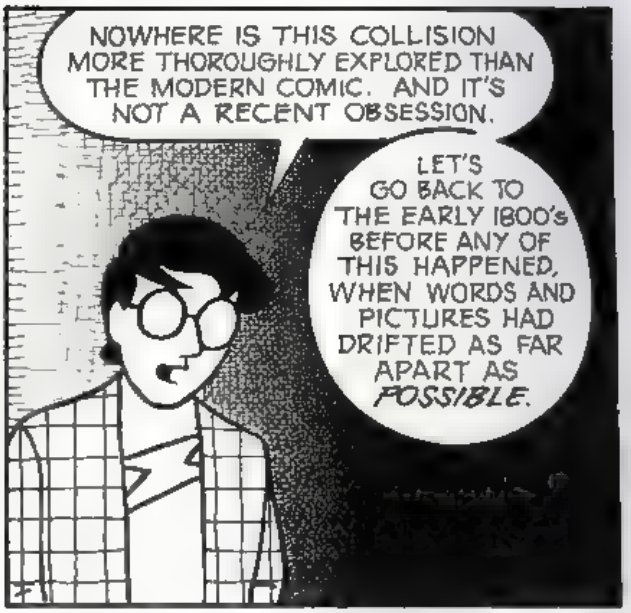
DADA POSTER FOR THE PLAY "THE BEARDED HEART"

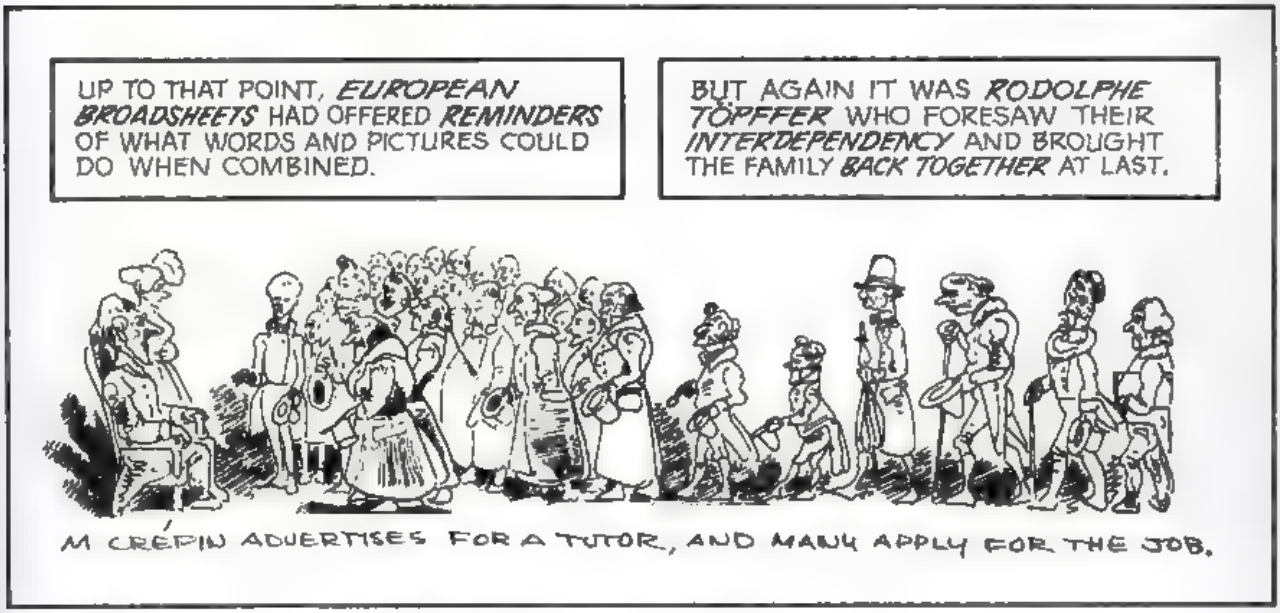



FACSIMILE OF "ORIENTAL SWEETNESS" (1938) BY PAUL KLEE

WHILE SOME ARTISTS ADDRESSED THE IRONIES OF WORDS AND PICTURES *HEAD-ON!*


NOWHERE IS THIS COLLISION MORE THOROUGHLY EXPLORED THAN THE MODERN COMIC. AND IT'S NOT A RECENT OBSESSION.
LET'S GO BACK TO THE EARLY 1800's BEFORE ANY OF THIS HAPPENED, WHEN WORDS AND PICTURES HAD DRIFTED AS FAR APART AS *POSSIBLE*.


UP TO THAT POINT, *EUROPEAN BROADSHEETS* HAD OFFERED *REMINDERS* OF WHAT WORDS AND PICTURES COULD DO WHEN COMBINED.
BUT AGAIN IT WAS *RODOLPHE TÖPFFER* WHO FORESAW THEIR *INTERDEPENDENCY* AND BROUGHT THE FAMILY *BACK TOGETHER* AT LAST.
M CRÉPIN ADVERTISES FOR A TUTOR, AND MANY APPLY FOR THE JOB.

TRANSLATION BY E. WIESE

--BUT THE FACT THAT THE MODERN COMIC WAS BORN JUST AS ART AND WRITING WERE PREPARING TO CHANGE DIRECTION IS AT LEAST *INTRIGUING*.

UNFORTUNATELY FOR *COMICS*, NO SOONER HAD THE FINE ARTS *REDISCOVERED* THE LINK BETWEEN WORDS AND PICTURES--

--THAN MODERN ART *ITSELF* BECAME VIRTUALLY *INCOMPREHENSIBLE* TO THE AVERAGE VIEWER!

WHAT THE HECK IS *THAT*?!

??

IT'S A *HOAX*, I TELL YA! MY TWO-YEAR-OLD *DAUGHTER* CAN PAINT BETTER THAN *THAT*!

DO PEOPLE REALLY PAY *MONEY* FOR THIS??

COOL

IN FACT, THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S PERCEPTIONS OF "GREAT" ART AND "GREAT" WRITING HASN'T CHANGED MUCH IN 150 YEARS.* ANY ARTIST WISHING TO DO GREAT WORK IN A MEDIUM *USING* WORDS AND PICTURES WILL HAVE TO *CONTEND* WITH THIS ATTITUDE

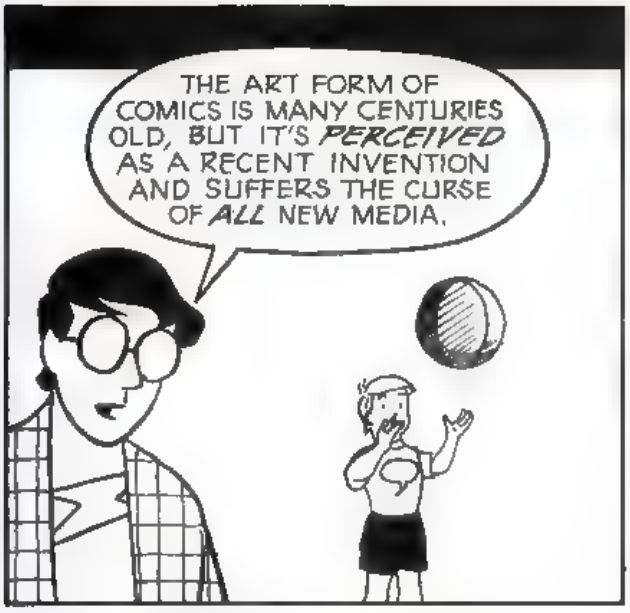
*Thou still unravish'd bride*
*Thou foster-child of silen*
*Sylvan historian, who cans*
*A flowery tale more sweetl*
*What leaf fring'd legend he*
*Of deities or mortals, or*
*In Tempe or the dales*
*What men or gods are th*
*What mad pursuit? What s*
*What pipes and timbrels*

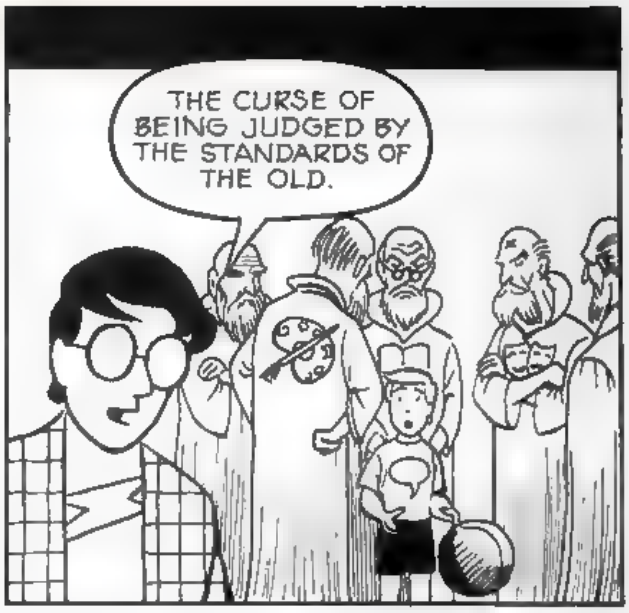
IN OTHERS *AND* IN *THEMSELVES*.

...BECAUSE, DEEP DOWN INSIDE, MANY COMICS CREATORS STILL MEASURE ART AND WRITING BY *DIFFERENT STANDARDS* AND ACT ON THE FAITH THAT *"GREAT"* ART AND *"GREAT"* WRITING WILL COMBINE HARMONIOUSLY BY VIRTUE OF *QUALITY ALONE*.

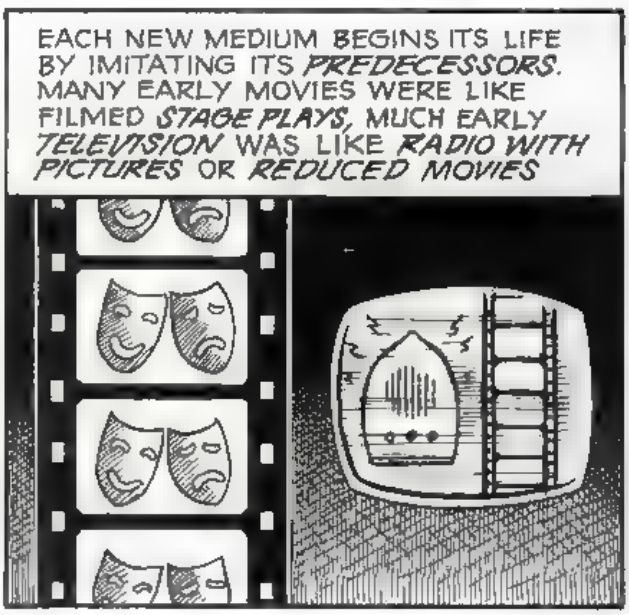
·FACE → TWO EYES, ONE NOSE, ONE MOUTH. → *Thy youth's proud livery, so gaz'd on now...*

* NOT AS MUCH AS WE LIKE TO *THINK* IT HAS, ANYWAY.

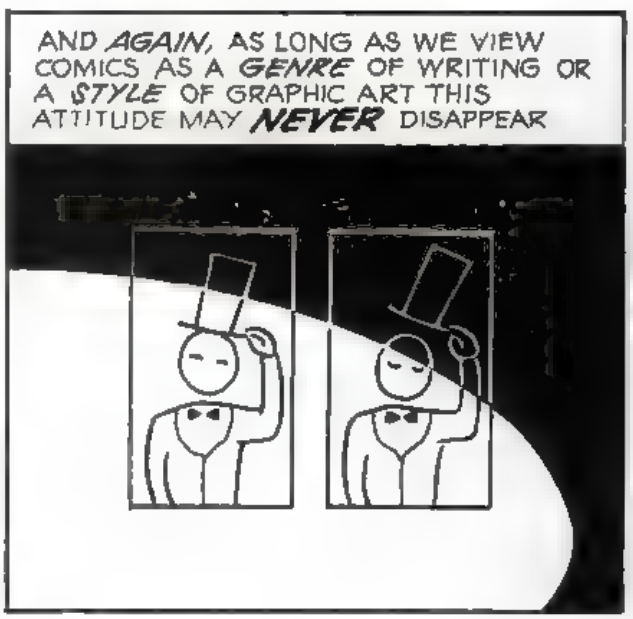

THE ART FORM OF COMICS IS MANY CENTURIES OLD, BUT IT'S *PERCEIVED* AS A RECENT INVENTION AND SUFFERS THE CURSE OF *ALL* NEW MEDIA.

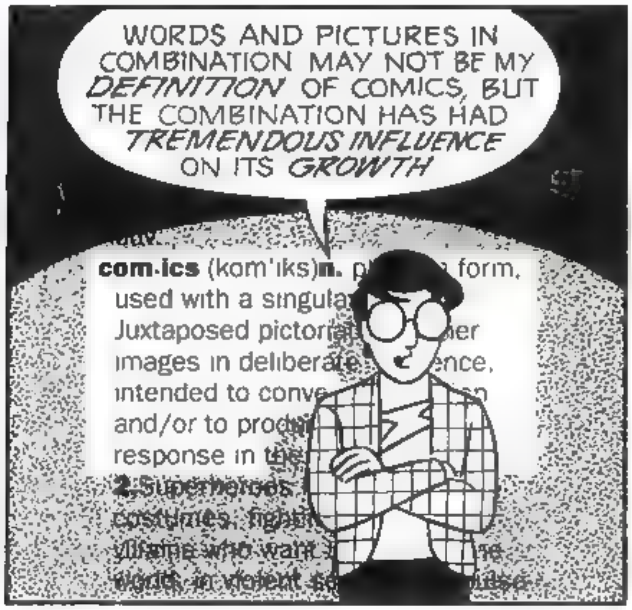

THE CURSE OF BEING JUDGED BY THE STANDARDS OF THE OLD.

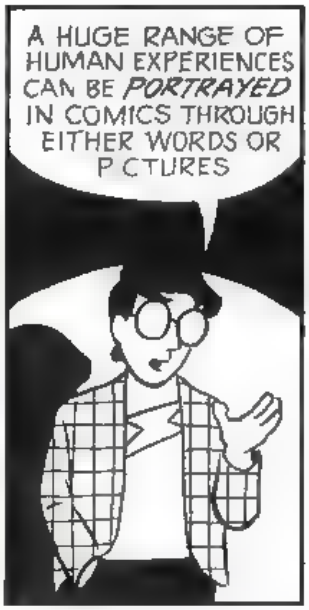
EVER SINCE THE INVENTION OF THE WRITTEN WORD, NEW MEDIA HAVE BEEN *MISUNDERSTOOD*
*CAREFUL, JACOB!* IF YOU KEEP DOING THIS, YOU'LL STOP USING YOUR *MEMORY!*

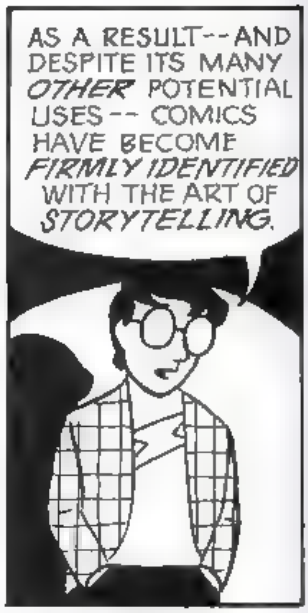

EACH NEW MEDIUM BEGINS ITS LIFE BY IMITATING ITS *PREDECESSORS*. MANY EARLY MOVIES WERE LIKE FILMED *STAGE PLAYS*, MUCH EARLY *TELEVISION* WAS LIKE *RADIO WITH PICTURES* OR *REDUCED MOVIES*

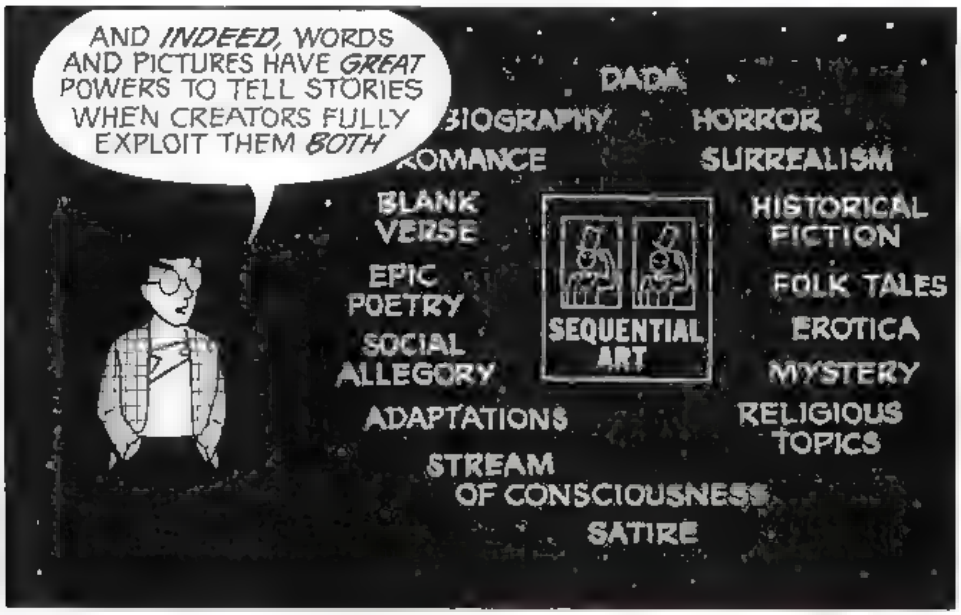
FAR TOO MANY COMICS CREATORS HAVE NO HIGHER GOAL THAN TO MATCH THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF OTHER MEDIA, AND VIEW ANY CHANCE TO *WORK* IN OTHER MEDIA AS A *STEP UP.*


AND *AGAIN*, AS LONG AS WE VIEW COMICS AS A *GENRE* OF WRITING OR A *STYLE* OF GRAPHIC ART THIS ATTITUDE MAY *NEVER* DISAPPEAR


WORDS AND PICTURES IN COMBINATION MAY NOT BE MY *DEFINITION* OF COMICS, BUT THE COMBINATION HAS HAD *TREMENDOUS INFLUENCE* ON ITS *GROWTH*
**com·ics** (kom'iks) **n.**
used with a singula
Juxtaposed pictori
images in deliberate
intended to conve
and/or to produ
response in the
**2.** Superheroes
costumes, fight
violence who want
world in violent s


A HUGE RANGE OF HUMAN EXPERIENCES CAN BE *PORTRAYED* IN COMICS THROUGH EITHER WORDS OR PICTURES

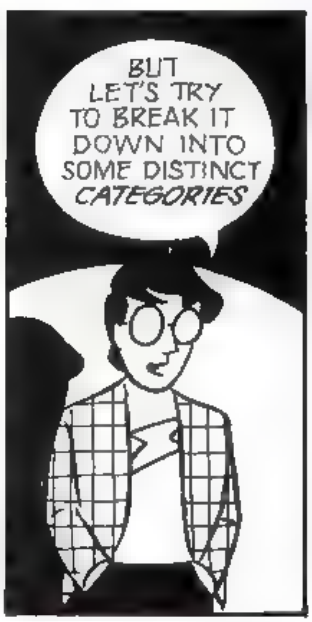

AS A RESULT--AND DESPITE ITS MANY *OTHER* POTENTIAL USES -- COMICS HAVE BECOME *FIRMLY IDENTIFIED* WITH THE ART OF *STORYTELLING.*


AND *INDEED,* WORDS AND PICTURES HAVE *GREAT* POWERS TO TELL STORIES WHEN CREATORS FULLY EXPLOIT THEM *BOTH*
DADA
BIOGRAPHY
HORROR
ROMANCE
SURREALISM
BLANK VERSE
HISTORICAL FICTION
EPIC POETRY
FOLK TALES
SEQUENTIAL ART
EROTICA
SOCIAL ALLEGORY
MYSTERY
ADAPTATIONS
RELIGIOUS TOPICS
STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS
SATIRE

AND SO FAR, WE'VE ONLY SEEN THE *TIP OF THE ICEBERG!*

AS CHILDREN, WE "SHOW AND TELL" *INTERCHANGEABLY,* WORDS AND IMAGES COMBINING TO TRANSMIT A *CONNECTED SERIES OF IDEAS.*
IT'S GOT ONE OF *THESE* THINGS.

THE DIFFERENT WAYS IN WHICH WORDS AND PICTURES CAN *COMBINE* IN COMICS IS VIRTUALLY *UNLIMITED.*


BUT LET'S TRY TO BREAK IT DOWN INTO SOME DISTINCT *CATEGORIES*

FIRST, WE HAVE THE WORD SPECIFIC COMBINATIONS, WHERE PICTURES ILLUSTRATE, BUT DON'T SIGNIFICANTLY ADD TO A LARGELY COMPLETE TEXT.
WE STUMBLED BACK TO THE APARTMENT SHORTLY BEFORE DAWN, VOMITING EVERY 20 YARDS.
JUDY GAVE ME HER KEYS AND SMILED
THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION WAS ADOPTED BY THE SECOND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS IN 1787 AND PUT INTO EFFECT IN 1789.
THEN THERE ARE PICTURE SPECIFIC COMBINATIONS WHERE WORDS DO LITTLE MORE THAN ADD A SOUNDTRACK TO A VISUALLY TOLD SEQUENCE.
HE DID IT!
MMM...
MMM.
AND, OF COURSE, DUO-SPECIFIC PANELS IN WHICH BOTH WORDS AND PICTURES SEND ESSENTIALLY THE SAME MESSAGE
GRIM-FACED, GEORGE LIFTED HIS LOLLYPOP
BUT THE CAPTAIN'S MIGHTY BLOW MISSES ITS INTENDED TARGET!
BLAST! HE DODGED MY PUNCH AND I STRUCK THIS BRICK WALL!
HA! I DODGED YO
I FEEL SO SAD!
.. THOUGHT AMY.

ANOTHER TYPE IS THE ADDITIVE COMBINATION WHERE WORDS AMPLIFY OR ELABORATE ON AN IMAGE OR VICE VERSA.
HOW D'YA LIKE MY NEW THREADS, BABE?
MY HEAD FEELS LIKE A SMASHED PUMPKIN!
IS THIS THE SAME JUPITER OF MY YOUTH?
IN PARALLEL COMBINATIONS, WORDS AND PICTURES SEEM TO FOLLOW VERY DIFFERENT COURSES--WITHOUT INTERSECTING.
"TALKED TO BILL YET?"
"SALLY DID WHY?"
"THE TEST RESULTS CAME BACK ALL NEGATIVE."
"REALLY? THAT'S GREAT!"
WELL...
PEPPER.
CEREAL.
MILK
BUTTER
LIGHT BULBS
STILL ANOTHER OPTION IS THE MONTAGE WHERE WORDS ARE TREATED AS INTEGRAL PARTS OF THE PICTURE.
CASH FLOW
BOTTO LINE
ANNUA
REPORT
HPPY!

PERHAPS THE MOST *COMMON* TYPE OF WORD/PICTURE COMBINATION IS THE ***INTER-DEPENDENT***, WHERE WORDS AND PICTURES GO ***HAND IN HAND*** TO CONVEY AN IDEA THAT NEITHER COULD CONVEY ***ALONE***.

*MEANWHILE...*

DID ANYONE *SEE* YOU?

*THIS* IS ALL I NEED TO *STOP HIM!*

I ASK YOU, DOES THIS GUY LOOK LIKE A *C.E.O.* TO *YOU*??

"AND JUST ***GUESS*** WHO DROVE UP IN BOB'S TRUCK AN HOUR LATER!"

"AFTER COLLEGE, I PURSUED A CAREER IN *HIGH FINANCE*"

HE'S LYING

UH HUH.

INTERDEPENDENT COMBINATIONS AREN'T ALWAYS AN ***EQUAL BALANCE*** THOUGH AND MAY FALL ***ANYWHERE*** ON A SCALE BETWEEN TYPES ONE AND TWO.

**P**

**W**

GENERALLY SPEAKING, THE MORE IS SAID WITH ***WORDS***, THE MORE THE PICTURES CAN BE FREED TO GO EXPLORING AND ***VICE VERSA***.

**W**

**P**

IN COMICS AT ITS *BEST*, WORDS AND PICTURES ARE LIKE *PARTNERS* IN A *DANCE* AND EACH ONE TAKES TURNS *LEADING*.

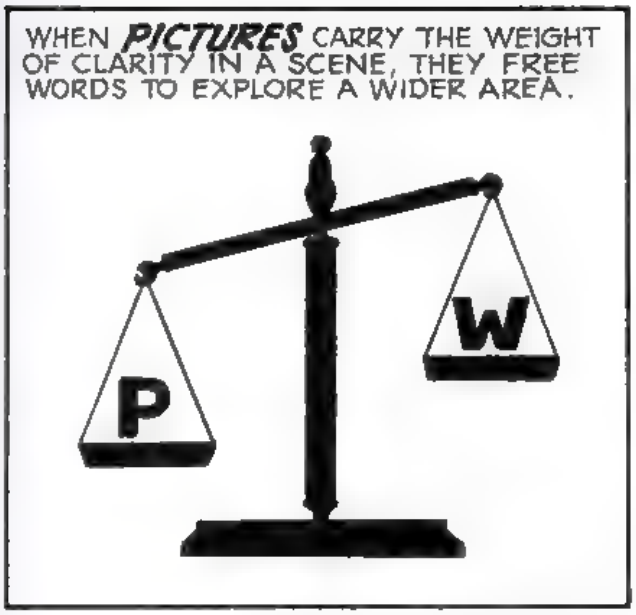
WHEN *BOTH* PARTNERS TRY TO LEAD, THE COMPETITION CAN *SUBVERT* THE OVERALL GOALS..
YOW!

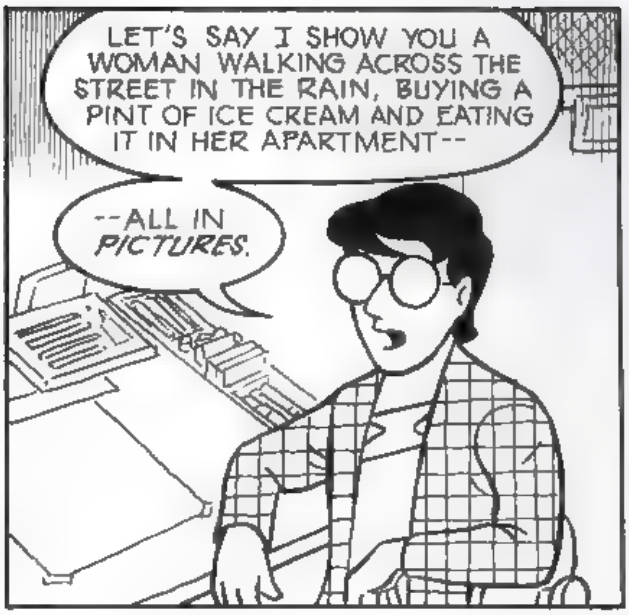
...THOUGH A LITTLE *PLAYFUL COMPETITION* CAN SOMETIMES PRODUCE *ENJOYABLE RESULTS*.

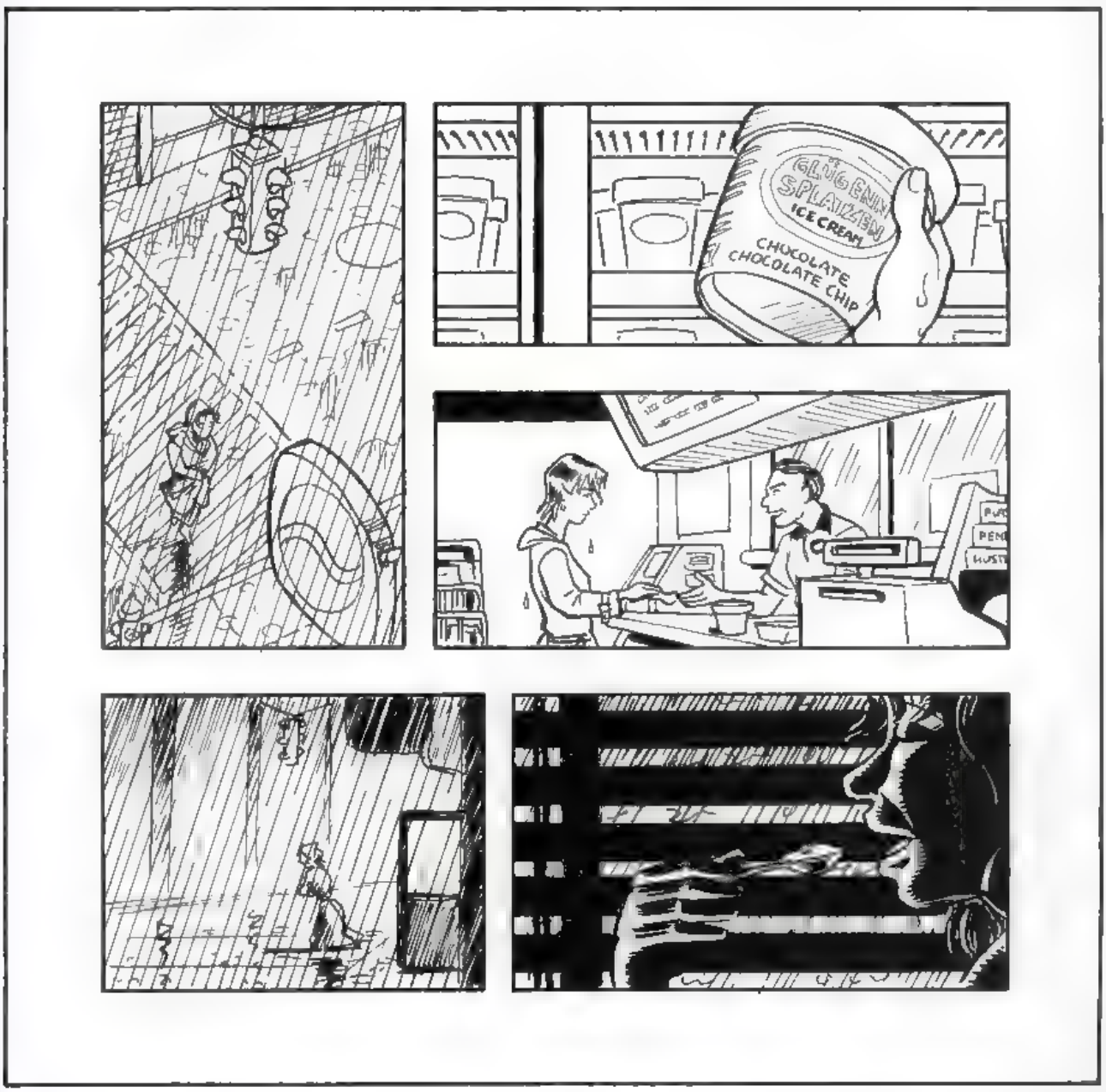
BUT WHEN THESE PARTNERS EACH *KNOW* THEIR ROLES--

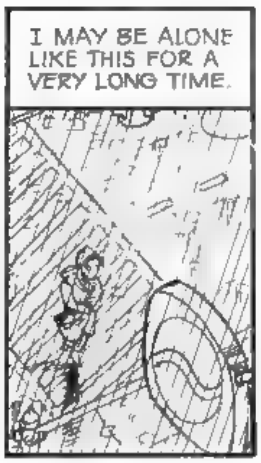
--AND *SUPPORT* EACH OTHER'S *STRENGTHS*--

--COMICS CAN MATCH *ANY* OF THE ART FORMS IT DRAWS SO MUCH OF ITS STRENGTH FROM


WHEN PICTURES CARRY THE WEIGHT OF CLARITY IN A SCENE, THEY FREE WORDS TO EXPLORE A WIDER AREA.
P
W


LET'S SAY I SHOW YOU A WOMAN WALKING ACROSS THE STREET IN THE RAIN, BUYING A PINT OF ICE CREAM AND EATING IT IN HER APARTMENT--
--ALL IN PICTURES.


EUGENIA SPLATZEN
ICE CREAM
CHOCOLATE CHOCOLATE CHIP




IT COULD BECOME AN *INTERNAL MONOLOGUE.*

(INTERDEPENDENT)

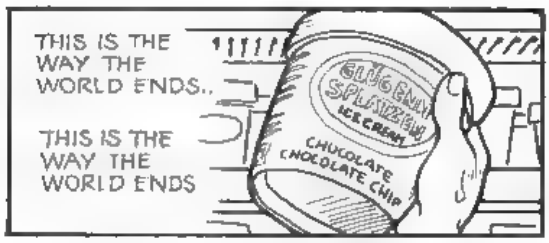
PERHAPS SOMETHING WILDLY *INCONGRUOUS*

(PARALLEL)

MAYBE IT'S ALL JUST A BIG *ADVERTISEMENT!*

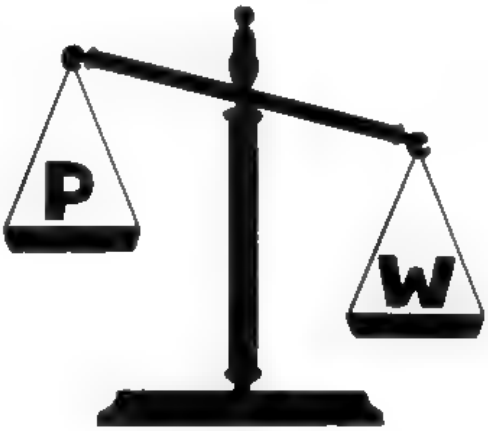
(INTERDEPENDENT)

OR A CHANCE TO RUMINATE ON *BROADER TOPICS.*




(INTERDEPENDENT)

ON THE *OTHER* HAND, IF THE ***WORDS*** LOCK IN THE *"MEANING"* OF A SEQUENCE, THEN THE *PICTURES* CAN REALLY TAKE OFF



I CROSSED THE STREET TO THE CONVENIENCE STORE. THE RAIN SOAKED INTO MY BOOTS.

I FOUND THE LAST PINT OF CHOCOLATE CHOCOLATE CHIP IN THE FREEZER.

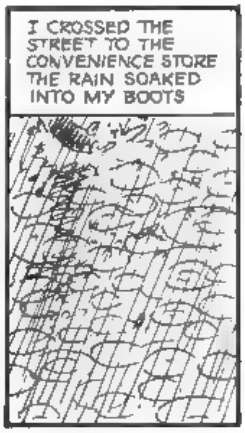
THE CLERK TRIED TO PICK ME UP. I SAID *NO THANKS.* HE GAVE ME THIS CREEPY LOOK...

I WENT BACK TO THE APARTMENT--

--AND FINISHED IT ALL IN AN HOUR.

ALONE AT LAST.

I CROSSED THE STREET TO THE CONVENIENCE STORE THE RAIN SOAKED INTO MY BOOTS
I FOUND THE LAST PINT OF CHOCOLATE CHOCOLATE CHIP IN THE FREEZER
THE CLERK TRIED TO PICK ME UP. I SAID NO THANKS. HE GAVE ME THIS CREEPY LOOK
I WENT BACK TO THE APARTMENT
AND FINISHED IT ALL IN AN HOUR
ALONE AT LAST
NOW, ONE COULD JUST COMBINE THE PICTURES FROM PAGE 157 WITH THE WORDS FROM PAGE 159 --




IF THE ARTIST WANTS TO, HE/SHE CAN NOW SHOW ONLY *FRAGMENTS* OF A SCENE.

(WORD SPECIFIC)

OR MOVE TOWARD GREATER LEVELS OF *ABSTRACTION* OR *EXPRESSION*.

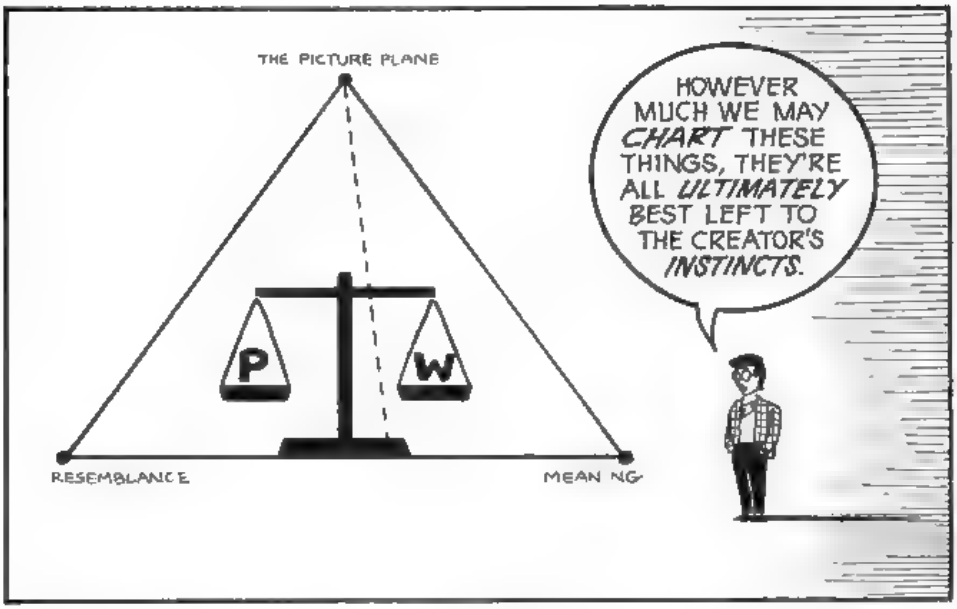
(AMPLIFICATION)

PERHAPS THE ARTIST CAN GIVE US SOME IMPORTANT *EMOTIONAL* INFORMATION

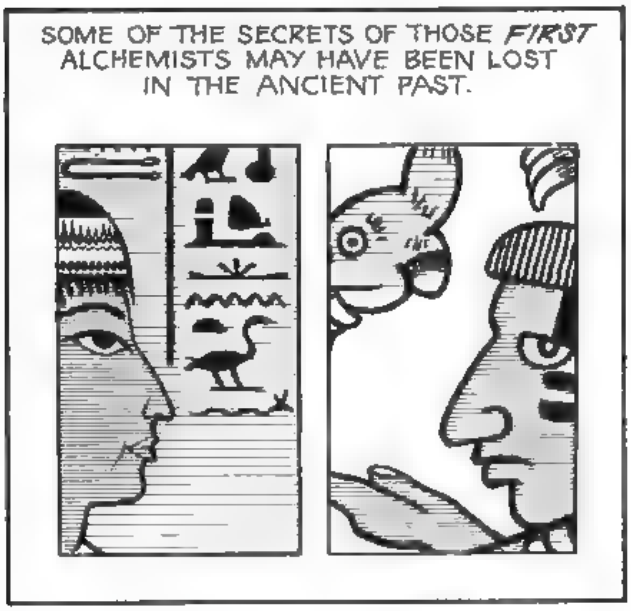
(INTERDEPENDENT)

OR SHIFT AHEAD OR BACKWARDS IN TIME

(WORD SPECIFIC)


THE PICTURE PLANE
P
W
RESEMBLANCE
MEAN NG
HOWEVER MUCH WE MAY CHART THESE THINGS, THEY'RE ALL ULTIMATELY BEST LEFT TO THE CREATOR'S INSTINCTS.

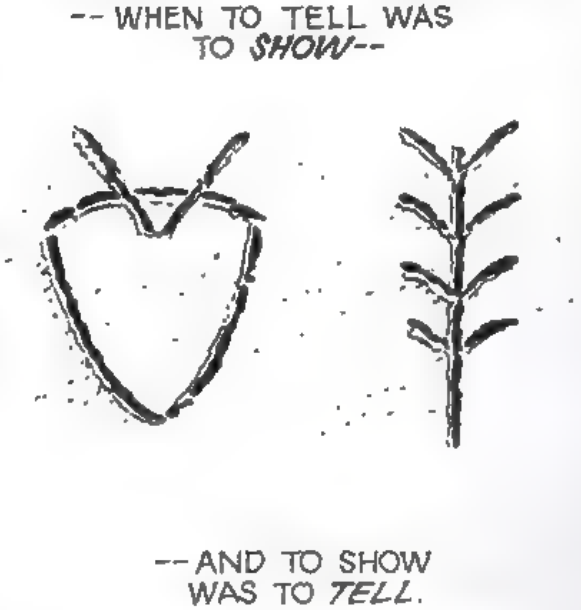
THE MIXING OF WORDS AND PICTURES IS MORE ALCHEMY THAN SCIENCE


SOME OF THE SECRETS OF THOSE FIRST ALCHEMISTS MAY HAVE BEEN LOST IN THE ANCIENT PAST.

BUT WE HAVE SOME POWERFUL MAGIC RIGHT HERE IN THE 20TH CENTURY, TOO!
THE RICHNESS OF MODERN LANGUAGE IS AN IRREPLACEABLE COMMODITY!
PUBLIC LIBRARY OF

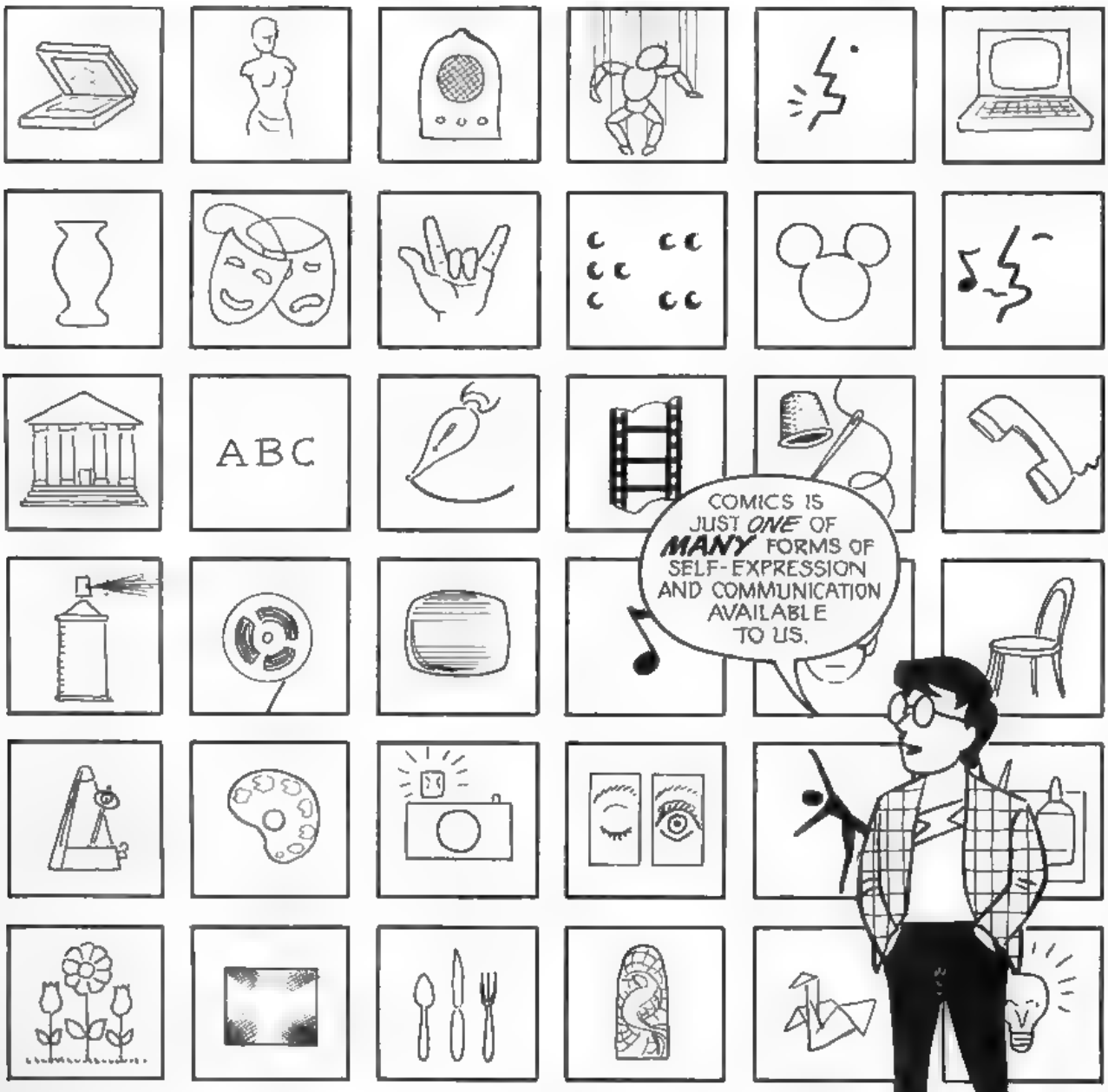
THIS IS AN EXCITING TIME TO BE MAKING COMICS, AND IN MANY WAYS I FEEL VERY LUCKY TO HAVE BEEN BORN WHEN I WAS

STILL, I DO FEEL A CERTAIN VAGUE LONGING FOR THAT TIME OVER 50 CENTURIES AGO--

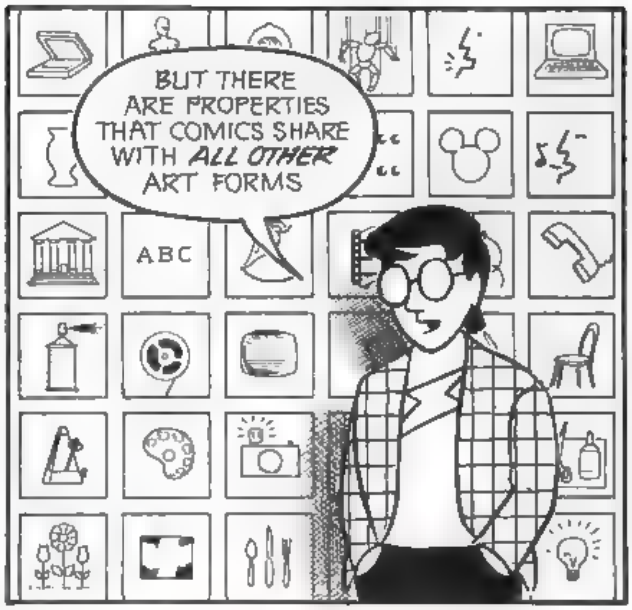

-- WHEN TO TELL WAS TO SHOW--
--AND TO SHOW WAS TO TELL.

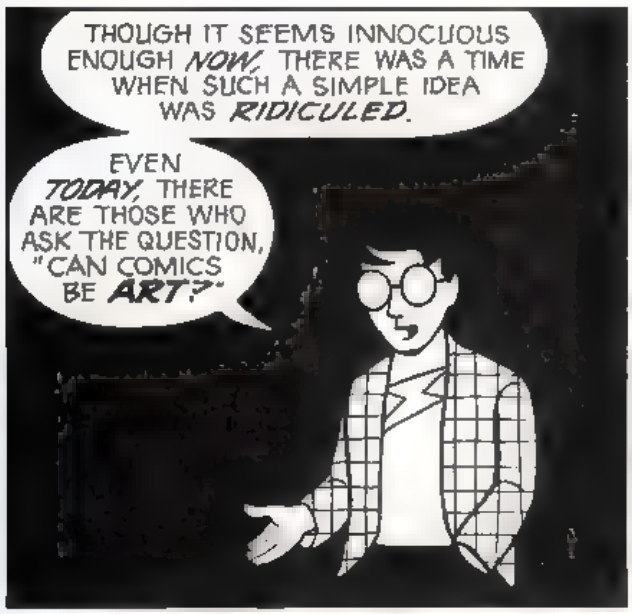
# CHAPTER SEVEN

## THE SIX STEPS.



SO FAR, WE'VE MOSTLY DEALT WITH THE UNIQUE PROPERTIES OF COMICS


BUT THERE ARE PROPERTIES THAT COMICS SHARE WITH ALL OTHER ART FORMS
ABC

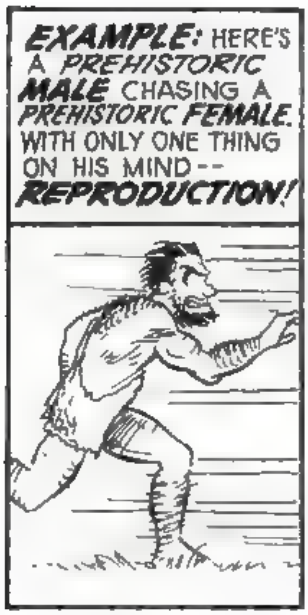

THOUGH IT SEEMS INNOCUOUS ENOUGH NOW, THERE WAS A TIME WHEN SUCH A SIMPLE IDEA WAS RIDICULED.
EVEN TODAY, THERE ARE THOSE WHO ASK THE QUESTION, "CAN COMICS BE ART?"

IT IS--
--I'M SORRY--
A REALLY STUPID QUESTION!

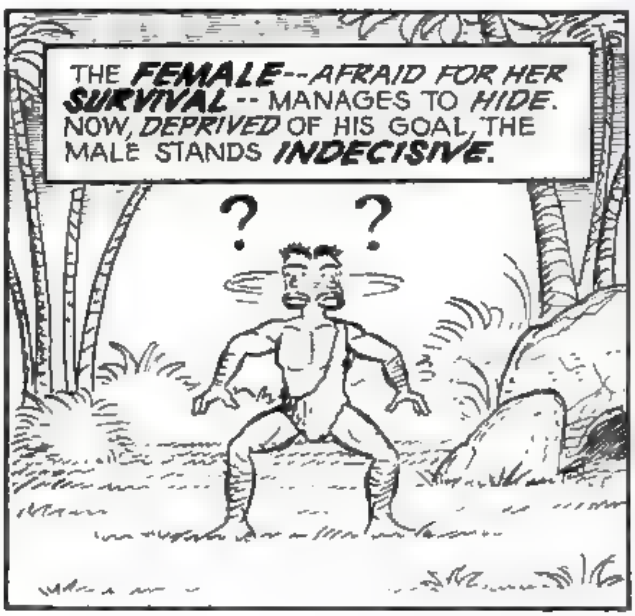
BUT IF WE MUST ANSWER IT, THE ANSWER IS YES.

ESPECIALLY IF YOUR DEFINITION OF ART IS AS BROAD AS MINE!

ART, AS I SEE IT, IS ANY HUMAN ACTIVITY WHICH DOESN'T GROW OUT OF EITHER OF OUR SPECIES' TWO BASIC INSTINCTS: SURVIVAL AND REPRODUCTION!
GRAAH!
EEEK!!


EXAMPLE: HERE'S A PREHISTORIC MALE CHASING A PREHISTORIC FEMALE. WITH ONLY ONE THING ON HIS MIND -- REPRODUCTION!

SO STRONG IS THIS INSTINCT THAT IT GOVERNS HIS EVERY MOVE! NOT ONE STEP IS WASTED IN THE PURSUIT OF HIS GOAL!

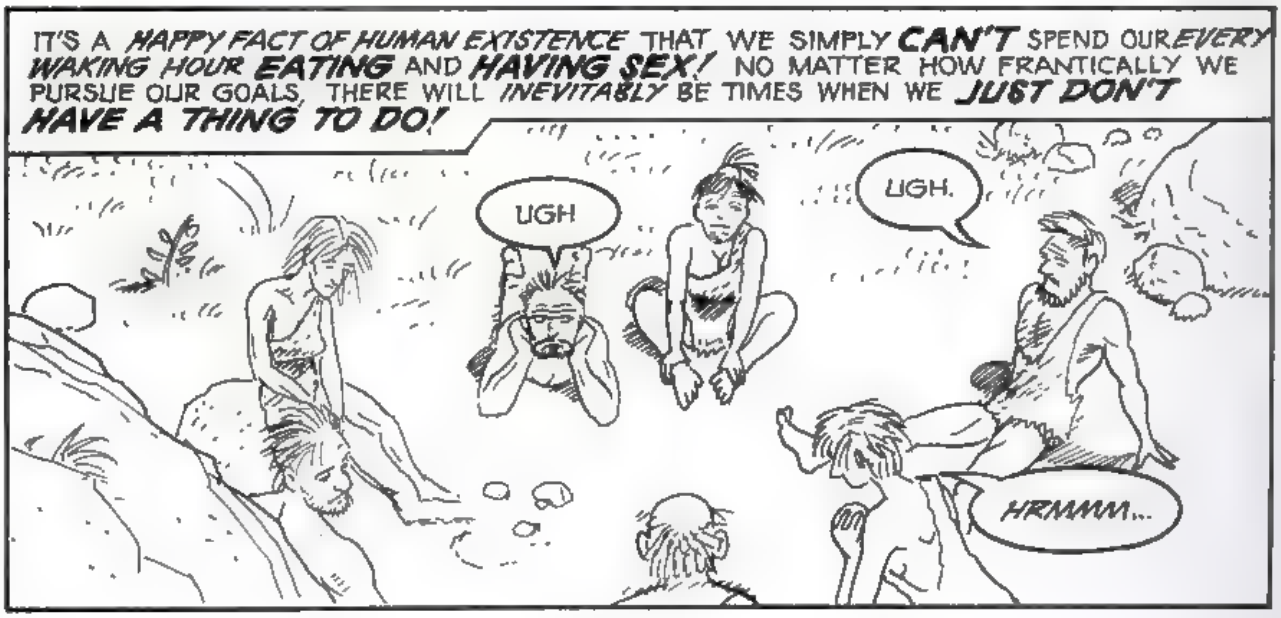

THE FEMALE--AFRAID FOR HER SURVIVAL -- MANAGES TO HIDE. NOW, DEPRIVED OF HIS GOAL, THE MALE STANDS INDECISIVE.
? ?

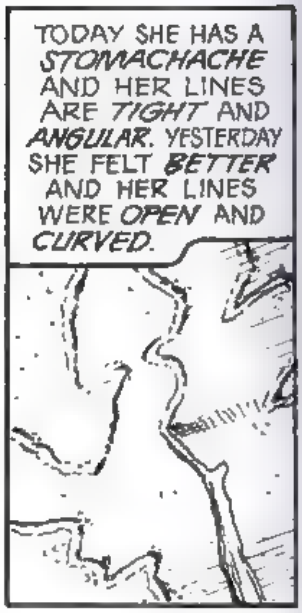
SUDDENLY--!
RUAR!!!

NOW ALL OF HIS THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS ARE FOCUSED ON THAT OTHER VITAL HUMAN INSTINCT-- SURVIVAL!

AGAIN HIS LEGS PROPEL HIM FORWARD WITH MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY!

TRAPPED ON THE EDGE OF A CLIFF, HIS MIND CAN ONLY CONCEIVE OF ONE PATH TO SURVIVAL!
HE TAKES IT!
AND SURVIVES.
ROOOAAARR
HIS NEXT MOVE MIGHT BE TO LOOK FOR FOOD (SURVIVAL) OR PERHAPS ANOTHER FEMALE (REPRODUCTION).
BUT INSTEAD...
THPLPLP!!
ART.


IT'S A HAPPY FACT OF HUMAN EXISTENCE THAT WE SIMPLY CAN'T SPEND OUR EVERY WAKING HOUR EATING AND HAVING SEX! NO MATTER HOW FRANTICALLY WE PURSUE OUR GOALS, THERE WILL INEVITABLY BE TIMES WHEN WE JUST DON'T HAVE A THING TO DO!
UGH
UGH.
HRMMM...



WHILE OVER *HERE,* A LITTLE GIRL *SINGS HER SONG OF YOUTH!*
DOOO

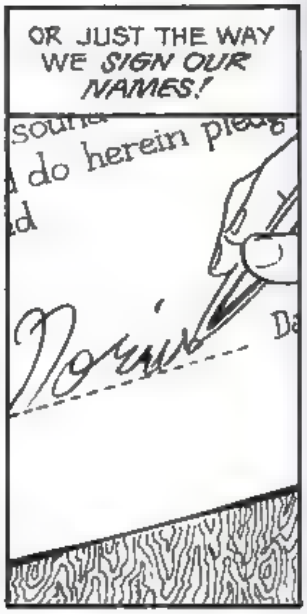
FIRST, THEY PROVIDE EXERCISE FOR MINDS AND BODIES NOT RECEIVING OUTSIDE STIMULUS.
SECOND, THEY PROVIDE AN OUTLET FOR EMOTIONAL IMBALANCES, AIDING IN THE RACE'S MENTAL SURVIVAL.
THIRD AND PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANTLY TO OUR SURVIVAL AS A RACE, SUCH RANDOM ACTIVITIES OFTEN LEAD---
--TO USEFUL DISCOVERIES!
AAH!!
FUMF!
THIS FUNCTION WOULD ALSO BE PERFORMED IN LATER CENTURIES BY SPORTS AND GAMES.
ART AS SELF EXPRESSION, THE ARTIST AS HERO; FOR MANY, ITS HIGHEST PURPOSE.
ART AS DISCOVERY, AS THE PURSUIT OF TRUTH, AS EXPLORATION; THE SOUL OF MUCH MODERN ART AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF LANGUAGE, SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY.
A LOT HAS CHANGED IN HALF A MILLION YEARS, BUT SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE.
OH NO! I'M GONNA BE LATE FOR THAT JOB INTERVIEW!
THE PROCESSES ARE MORE COMPLEX NOW, BUT THE INSTINCTS* REMAIN THE SAME. SURVIVAL AND REPRODUCTION STILL HOLD THE UPPER HAND.

* ALONG WITH THEIR MANY RELATED FEELINGS AND CUSTOMS.

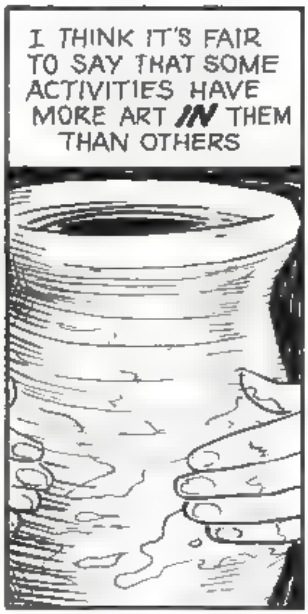
YET IN ALMOST EVERYTHING WE DO THERE IS AT LEAST AN *ELEMENT* OF ART

PERHAPS A LITTLE *UNNECESSARY CHOREOGRAPHY* ON THE *ASSEMBLY LINE.*
OOOH, *BEHBEE!*

OR THE *PERSONAL STYLE* OF A *BICYCLE MESSENGER*
HONK! HONK!


OR JUST THE WAY WE *SIGN OUR NAMES!*
do herein

IN *SOME* OCCUPATIONS, THE LATITUDE FOR SELF-EXPRESSION IS *GREATER.* *SURVIVAL*--MAKING A LIVING--GOES HAND IN HAND WITH *CREATIVE DESIRE*


I THINK IT'S FAIR TO SAY THAT SOME ACTIVITIES HAVE MORE ART *IN* THEM THAN OTHERS

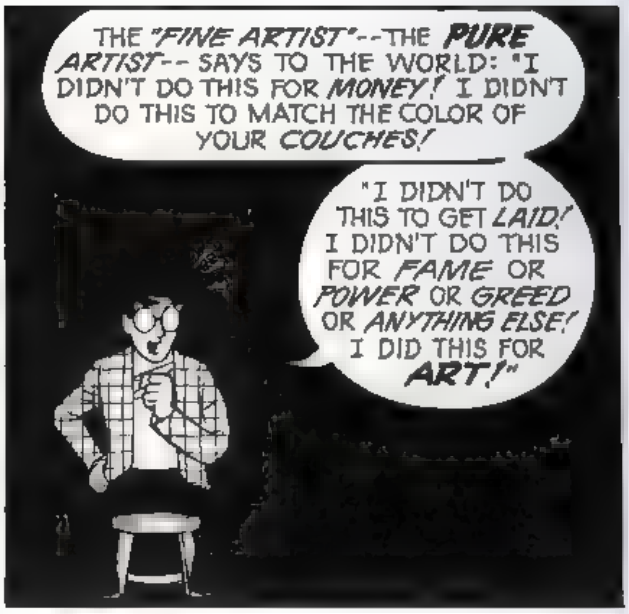
LIFE IS A SERIES OF *MINUTE DECISIONS,* SOME MOTIVATED BY *SURVIVAL,* SOME *NOT,* AND PROPORTIONS DO *VARY.*

*BUT* TO PROCLAIM, AS SO MANY SO OFTEN *DO,* THAT--
*THAT'S NOT ART!*
--PRESUMES THAT ART IS AN *EITHER/OR* PROPOSITION. I DON'T THINK IT IS

RARE IS THE PERSON IN *ANY* OCCUPATION WHO EXPRESSES *NOTHING...*

. AND RARE IS THE *ARTIST* WHO CARES NOTHING FOR *SUCCESS,* I.E., *SURVIVAL!*

BUT THE IDEAL OF THE LATTER IS ALIVE IN THE HEARTS OF MANY ARTISTS WHO MAY HOPE FOR SUCCESS, BUT WON'T ALTER THEIR WORK TO OBTAIN IT.
$$
$
POWER
FAME
SEX
$$$$$

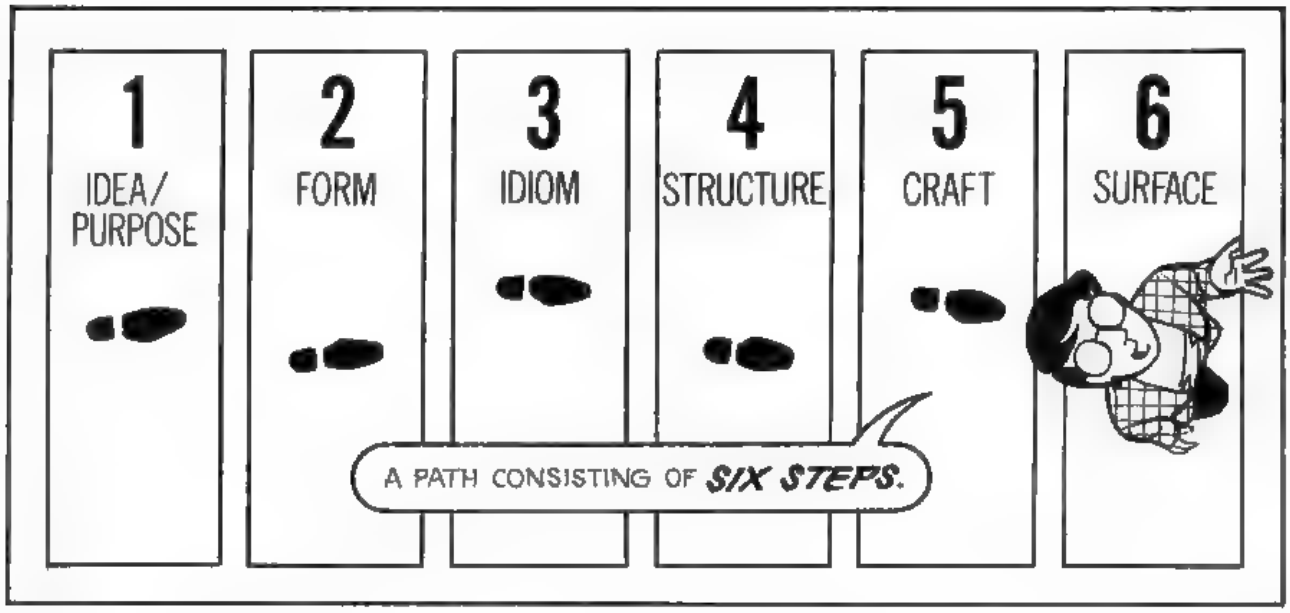

THE "FINE ARTIST"--THE PURE ARTIST-- SAYS TO THE WORLD: "I DIDN'T DO THIS FOR MONEY! I DIDN'T DO THIS TO MATCH THE COLOR OF YOUR COUCHES!
"I DIDN'T DO THIS TO GET LAID! I DIDN'T DO THIS FOR FAME OR POWER OR GREED OR ANYTHING ELSE! I DID THIS FOR ART!"

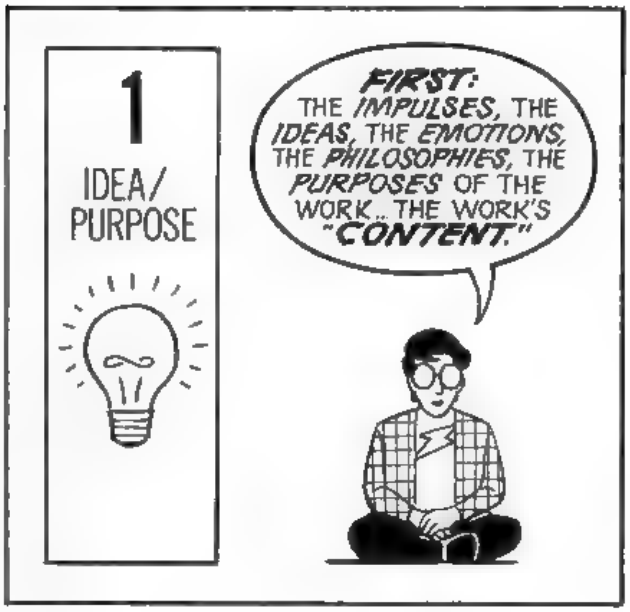
IN OTHER WORDS: "MY ART HAS NO PRACTICAL VALUE WHATSOEVER!"
"BUT IT'S IMPORTANT!"

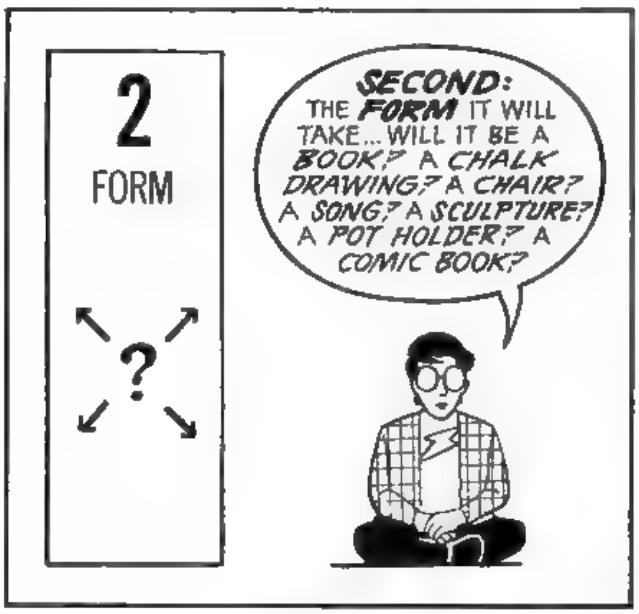
AND SOMETIMES IT IS, THOUGH IT MIGHT TAKE A CENTURY OR TWO FOR THE REST OF THE WORLD TO FIND OUT!

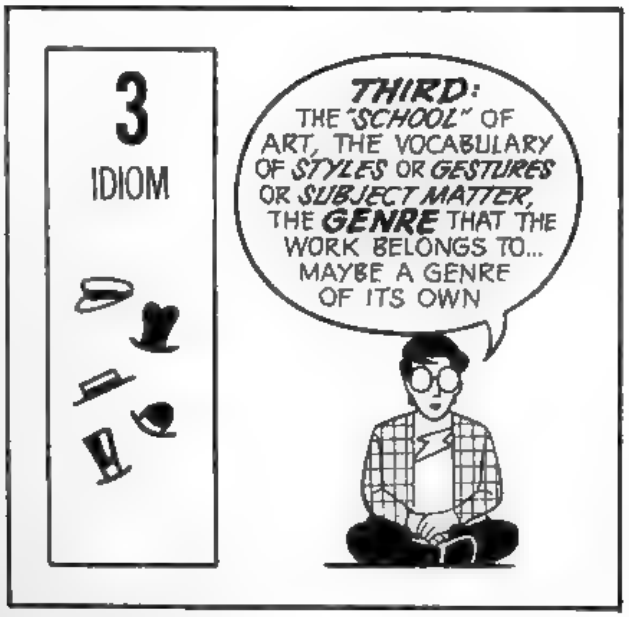
"PURE" ART IS ESSENTIALLY TIED TO THE QUESTION OF PURPOSE-- OF DECIDING WHAT YOU WANT OUT OF ART.

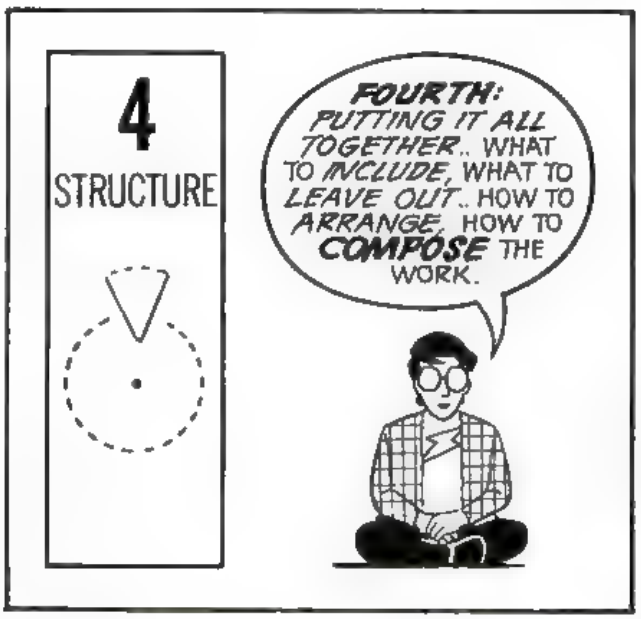
THIS IS AS TRUE IN COMICS AS IT IS IN PAINTING, WRITING, THEATRE, FILM, SCULPTURE, OR ANY OTHER FORM...
...BECAUSE THE CREATION OF ANY WORK IN ANY MEDIUM WILL ALWAYS FOLLOW A CERTAIN PATH.


1
IDEA/ PURPOSE
2
FORM
3
IDIOM
4
STRUCTURE
5
CRAFT
6
SURFACE
A PATH CONSISTING OF SIX STEPS.


1
IDEA/ PURPOSE
FIRST: THE IMPULSES, THE IDEAS, THE EMOTIONS, THE PHILOSOPHIES, THE PURPOSES OF THE WORK.. THE WORK'S "CONTENT."


2
FORM
?
SECOND: THE FORM IT WILL TAKE... WILL IT BE A BOOK? A CHALK DRAWING? A CHAIR? A SONG? A SCULPTURE? A POT HOLDER? A COMIC BOOK?


3
IDIOM
THIRD: THE "SCHOOL" OF ART, THE VOCABULARY OF STYLES OR GESTURES OR SUBJECT MATTER, THE GENRE THAT THE WORK BELONGS TO... MAYBE A GENRE OF ITS OWN


4
STRUCTURE
FOURTH: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER.. WHAT TO INCLUDE, WHAT TO LEAVE OUT.. HOW TO ARRANGE, HOW TO COMPOSE THE WORK.

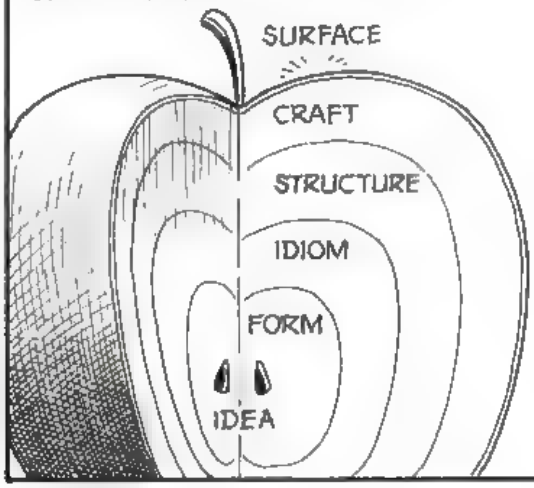
5
CRAFT

FIFTH: CONSTRUCTING THE WORK, APPLYING SKILLS, PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE, INVENTION, PROBLEM-SOLVING, GETTING THE "JOB" DONE

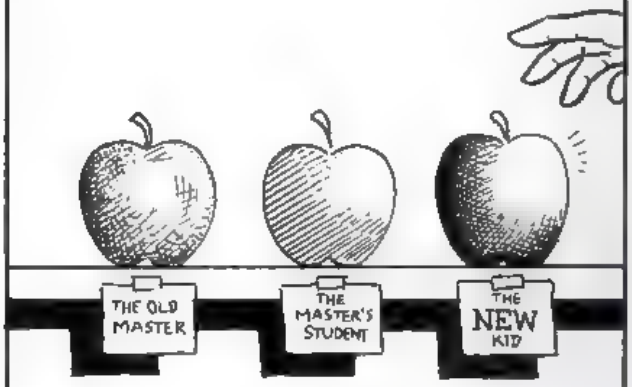
6
SURFACE

SIXTH: PRODUCTION VALUES, FINISHING... THE ASPECTS MOST APPARENT ON FIRST SUPERFICIAL EXPOSURE TO THE WORK.

IN ALL THE ARTS IT'S THE SURFACE THAT PEOPLE APPRECIATE MOST EASILY, LIKE AN APPLE CHOSEN FOR ITS SHINY SKIN.




THE LATEST "FAN FAVORITE" OFTEN LOOKS BETTER AT A GLANCE THAN THE OLDER ARTISTS WHO HAD THE IDEAS AND CREATED THE IDIOMS, BUT WERE LESS INTERESTED IN SURFACES.



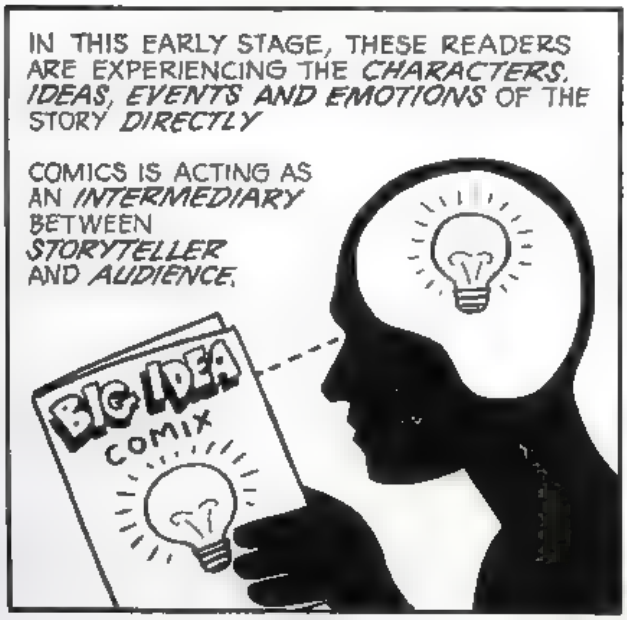

BUT OFTEN IF WE BITE INTO THAT SHINY NEW APPLE--

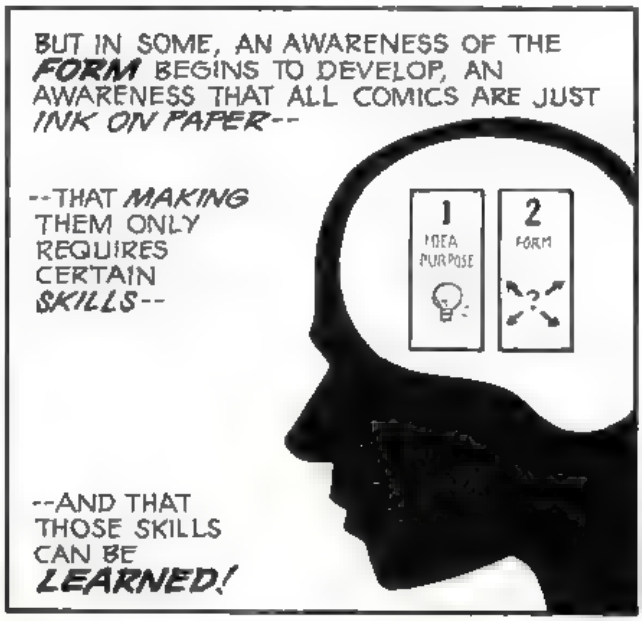
CRUNCH!

HOLLOW

IT'S A CYCLE AS OLD AS ART ITSELF.

IN COMICS, THE CYCLE BEGINS ALL OVER THE WORLD, AS YOUNG READERS DISCOVER COMICS FOR THE FIRST TIME AND IN A FEW CASES, BEGIN TO DEVELOP A LOVE FOR COMICS THAT WILL LAST A LIFETIME!
UNE AVENTURE D'Asterix LE GAULOIS
le bouclier ARVERNE
BATMAN


IN THIS EARLY STAGE, THESE READERS ARE EXPERIENCING THE CHARACTERS, IDEAS, EVENTS AND EMOTIONS OF THE STORY DIRECTLY
COMICS IS ACTING AS AN INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN STORYTELLER AND AUDIENCE.
BIG IDEA COMIX


BUT IN SOME, AN AWARENESS OF THE FORM BEGINS TO DEVELOP, AN AWARENESS THAT ALL COMICS ARE JUST INK ON PAPER--
--THAT MAKING THEM ONLY REQUIRES CERTAIN SKILLS--
--AND THAT THOSE SKILLS CAN BE LEARNED!
1 IDEA PURPOSE
2 FORM

ONE OF THEM--FULL OF *BIG IDEAS*--
MAKES THE *BIG DECISION*.

I'M GONNA MAKE *COMICS* WHEN I GROW UP!

WHEN

HE'S OFF TO A LOGICAL START. HE HAS THE *IDEAS* AND HE'S CHOSEN *COMICS* AS HIS *FORM OF EXPRESSION*. MAYBE NOW HE'LL CONSIDER WHAT *TYPES* OF COMICS ARE RIGHT FOR HIM

1 IDEA

2 FORM

3 GENRE ?

BUT PROBABLY *NOT*.

MORE LIKELY HE *POSTPONES* HIS *OWN* IDEAS AND BEGINS TO STUDY THE *CRAFT* OF *OTHER* ARTISTS IN HIS ATTEMPT TO BECOME A *PROFESSIONAL*.

HE BUYS THE *"RIGHT"* BRUSH, THE *"RIGHT"* PENS AND THE *"RIGHT"* PAPER AND BEGINS TO *PRACTICE*.

*EVENTUALLY...*

6 SURFACE

*LOOK, JACK!* I CAN DRAW AS WELL AS A *PROFESSIONAL!*

*WOW!*

BUT WHEN HE BRINGS THE WORK TO A *REAL* PROFESSIONAL AT THE LOCAL *CON*:

...ANATOMY IS VERY POOR... SEE HOW THAT MUSCLE CONNECTS?.. AND THAT PERSPECTIVE, *YEESH!*...DO YOU KNOW WHAT A *VANISHING POINT* IS? ...AND AS FOR *FACES*...

-GULP-

Joe Pro

SO HE BUYS SOME BOOKS ON *ANATOMY* AND *PERSPECTIVE*, STUDIES A VARIETY OF *DRAWING TECHNIQUES* AND *PRACTICES*, *PRACTICES*, *PRACTICES* FOR *MONTHS*.

MAY

JUNE

JULY

SEPTEMBER

BUT SOMEHOW, IT NEVER QUITE *"CLICKS"* FOR HIM. MAYBE HE JUST DOESN'T HAVE ENOUGH *SKILL*... MAYBE HE *LOSES INTEREST*... MAYBE LIFE JUST *GETS IN THE WAY*. BUT FOR *WHATEVER REASON*--

-- HE LEAVES HIS DREAMS OF MAKING COMICS *BEHIND*.

***BUT*** ALL OVER THE WORLD, OTHERS HAVE UNDERGONE *SIMILAR EXPERIENCES* AND ***HAVEN'T GIVEN UP YET!***

豆汁

ONE OF THEM IS NOW READY TO TAKE THE ***NEXT STEP!*** SHE'S STUDIED HER *CRAFT* ALL THE WAY THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL AND INTO *COLLEGE*.

SHE'S A *GOOD, HARDWORKING STUDENT.*

5
CRAFT

<I THINK I'VE REALLY MADE A *BREAKTHROUGH!*>

<THIS IS *VERY GOOD.*>

BUT WHEN SHE SHOWS HER WORK TO A *SEASONED PRO*..

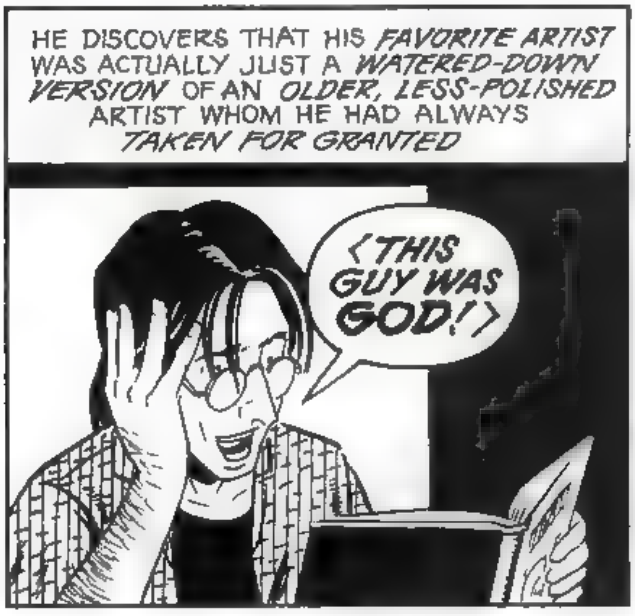
<YOU'RE A SKILLED *SCRIPTER* AND *DRAFTSPERSON*, BUT YOUR *STORYTELLING* ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH, YOU HAVE NO SENSE OF *PACING*...THESE LAYOUTS ARE VERY *MUDDY*... YOU HAVE TO *COMPOSE* YOUR STORIES...>

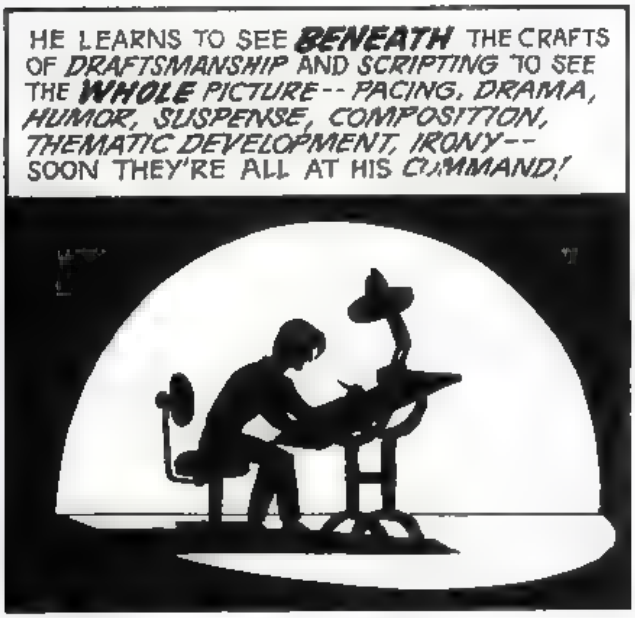
<GULP!>

HER SKILLS ***CAN*** GET HER ***WORK*** AT THIS POINT, BUT ONLY AS AN *ASSISTANT* TO OTHERS. UNTIL SHE UNDERSTANDS THE *STRUCTURE* OF COMICS *BENEATH* THE CRAFT, THIS IS AS FAR AS SHE CAN GO.

BUT MAYBE THIS IS ENOUGH FOR THIS PARTICULAR ARTIST, ENOUGH TO JUST BE PART OF THE ART, BUSINESS, AND COMMUNITY OF COMICS WITHOUT NECESSARILY CALLING THE SHOTS.

HE SPENDS HIS EVERY WAKING HOUR WORKING OUT THE DIFFICULT PRINCIPLES OF COMICS COMPOSITION AND STORYTELLING, THE KIND THEY DON'T TEACH IN BOOKS!*
<PLEASE, TRY TO GET SOME SLEEP, HONEY.>


HE DISCOVERS THAT HIS FAVORITE ARTIST WAS ACTUALLY JUST A WATERED-DOWN VERSION OF AN OLDER, LESS-POLISHED ARTIST WHOM HE HAD ALWAYS TAKEN FOR GRANTED
<THIS GUY WAS GOD!>


HE LEARNS TO SEE BENEATH THE CRAFTS OF DRAFTSMANSHIP AND SCRIPTING TO SEE THE WHOLE PICTURE-- PACING, DRAMA, HUMOR, SUSPENSE, COMPOSITION, THEMATIC DEVELOPMENT, IRONY-- SOON THEY'RE ALL AT HIS COMMAND!

* WELL, OKAY, ONE BOOK! EISNER'S, AGAIN

AND LET'S SAY IT *WORKS!* HE *DOES* LAND HIS OWN BOOK AND SOON IS ESTABLISHED AS A CREATOR OF *GREAT SKILL*. HE UNDERSTANDS *COMICS STORYTELLING* BETTER THAN MOST.

<THAT GUY'S ART IS ALL JUST "*SURFACE*"!>

AND HE *KNOWS* IT!

<*WOW*!>

HIS WORK ISN'T PARTICULARLY *ORIGINAL*, THE CRITICS DON'T PAY MUCH ATTENTION TO HIM, BUT HE MAKES A *DECENT LIVING* FOR *HIMSELF AND HIS FAMILY* AND THAT'S ENOUGH FOR HIM ..

. ENOUGH THAT FOR WHAT HE DOES, HE'S *ONE OF THE BEST.*

BUT *ANOTHER ARTIST* HAS MADE IT THROUGH THE *SAME* SORTS OF HURDLES AND REACHED THE *SAME* LEVELS OF SUCCESS AND *STILL ISN'T SATISFIED*

SHE WONDERS IF HER SUCCESS REALLY *MEANS* ANYTHING WHEN THERE ARE *SO MANY OTHERS* DOING THE *SAME THINGS* IN THE *SAME WAYS*. SHE WANTS AN *IDENTITY.*

X-MEN

X-MEN

X-MEN

X-MEN

SHE BELIEVES THAT THERE'S SOMETHING *MORE*--SOME *PIECE OF THE PUZZLE*--THAT SHE *STILL HASN'T FOUND.*

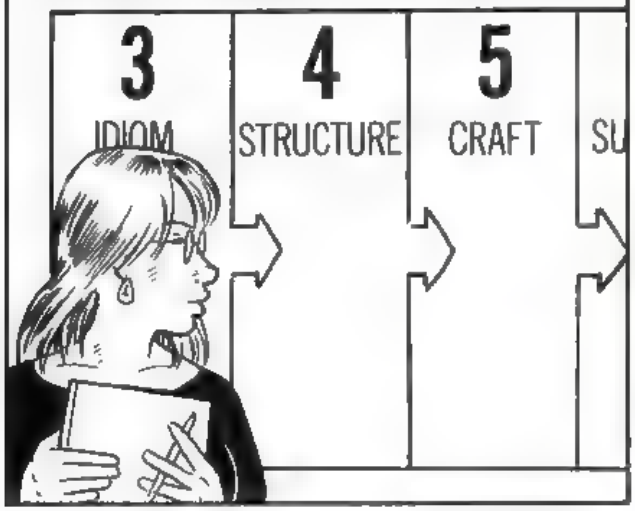
4

5
CRAFT

6
SURFACE

SHE BEGINS TO INVENT *NEW WAYS* OF SHOWING "*THE SAME OLD THING.*" SHE DEVELOPS *INNOVATIVE NEW TECHNIQUES*, AND STARTS *DOING AWAY* WITH "THE SAME OLD THING" *ALTOGETHER!*

AS SHE CREATES *HER OWN PERSONAL* ***IDIOM*** OF COMICS, SHE FINDS THE WHOLE OF HER WORK CHANGING TO *SUIT* THAT IDIOM

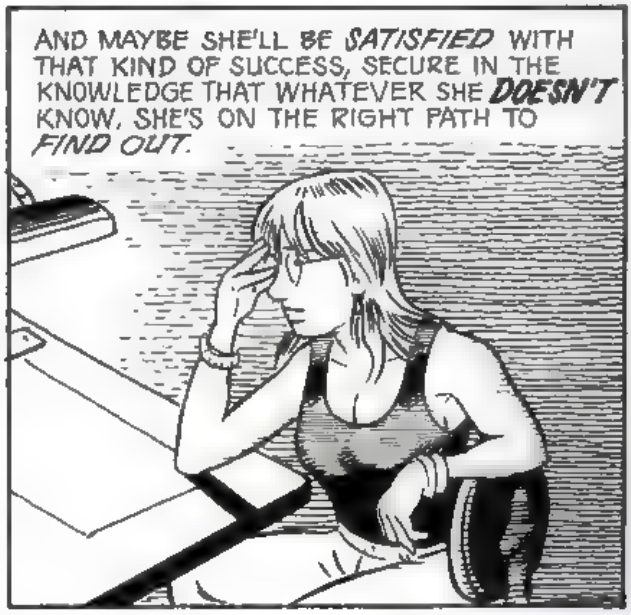



LET'S SAY THAT *FINANCIAL SUCCESS* AND THE *RESPECT OF HER PEERS* SOON FOLLOW *

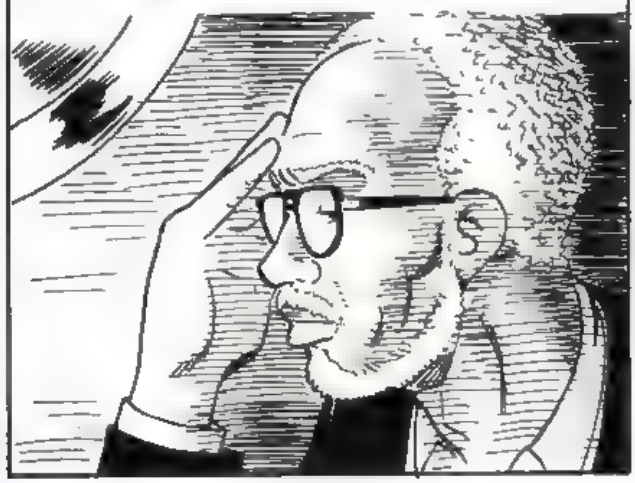
I WANT TO THANK ALL OF THOSE WHO HELPED ME TO ACHIEVE MY *FULL POTENTIAL!*
3
IDIOM
*HOSTILITY, REJECTION AND POVERTY ARE ALSO POSSIBLE, OF COURSE
CLAP!
CLAP! CLAP!
CLAP! CLAP!
CLAP!

YOUNG ARTISTS BEGIN TO *IMITATE* HER STYLE, BUT MOST OF THEM ONLY SEEM TO APPRECIATE THE *"SURFACE."*

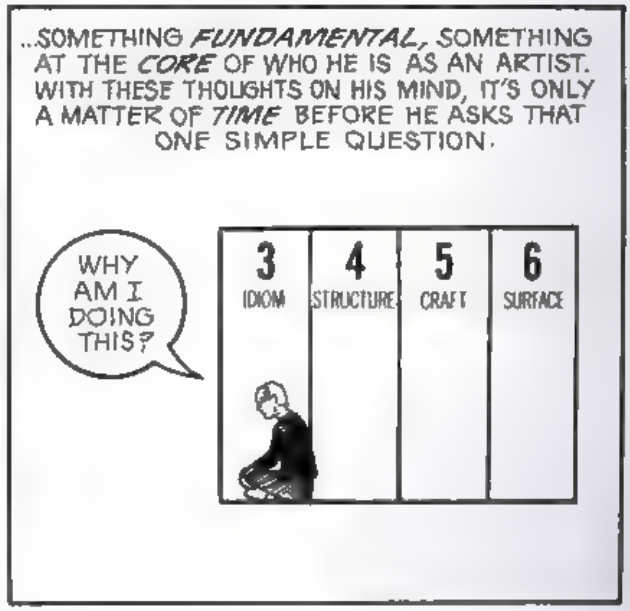
AND MAYBE SHE'LL BE *SATISFIED* WITH THAT KIND OF SUCCESS, SECURE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT WHATEVER SHE ***DOESN'T*** KNOW, SHE'S ON THE RIGHT PATH TO *FIND OUT.*

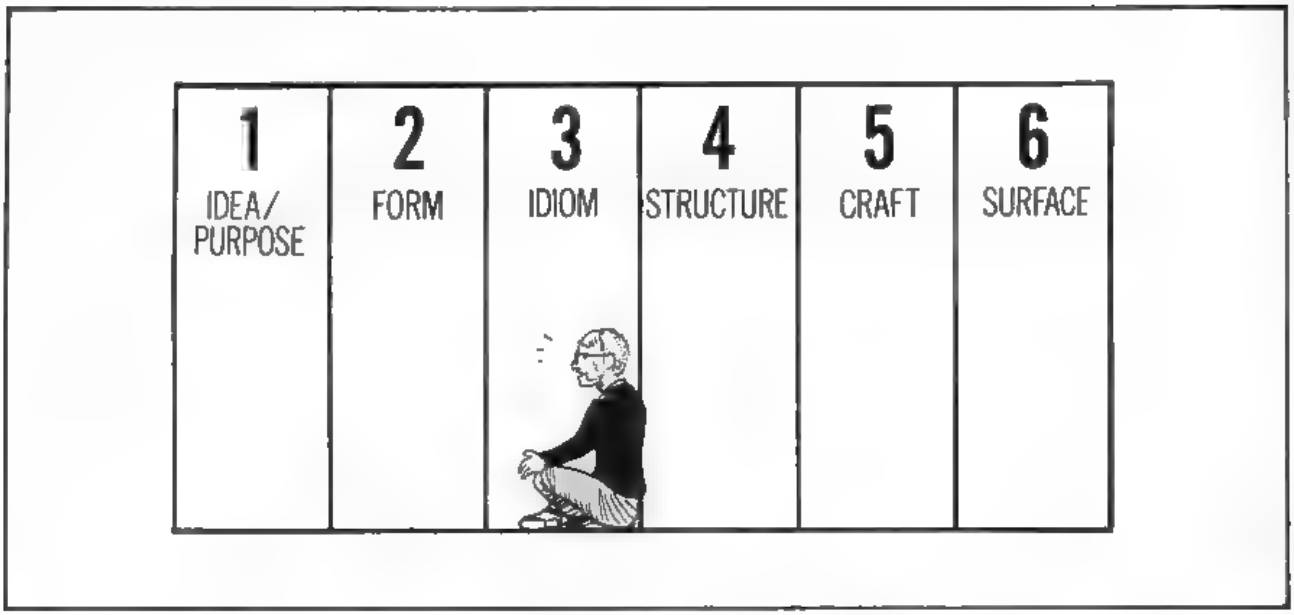


BUT *ELSEWHERE, ANOTHER* CREATOR HAS MADE IT TO THIS SAME PLACE AND STILL FEELS *DISSATISFIED.* HE FEELS THAT SOMETHING VERY *IMPORTANT* HAS BEEN NEGLECTED...



...SOMETHING ***FUNDAMENTAL,*** SOMETHING AT THE *CORE* OF WHO HE IS AS AN ARTIST. WITH THESE THOUGHTS ON HIS MIND, IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF *TIME* BEFORE HE ASKS THAT ONE SIMPLE QUESTION.




1
IDEA/ PURPOSE
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FORM
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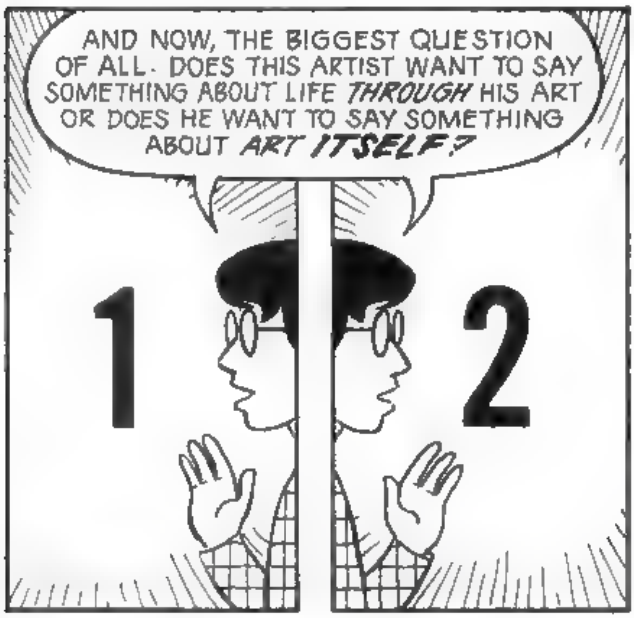
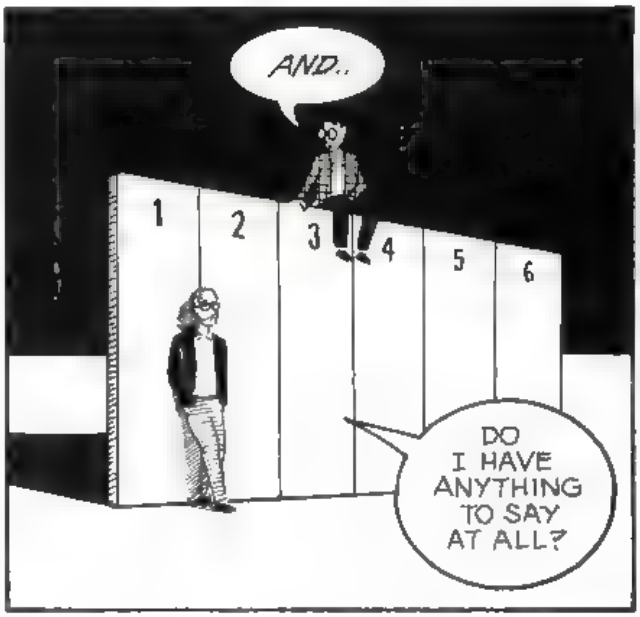
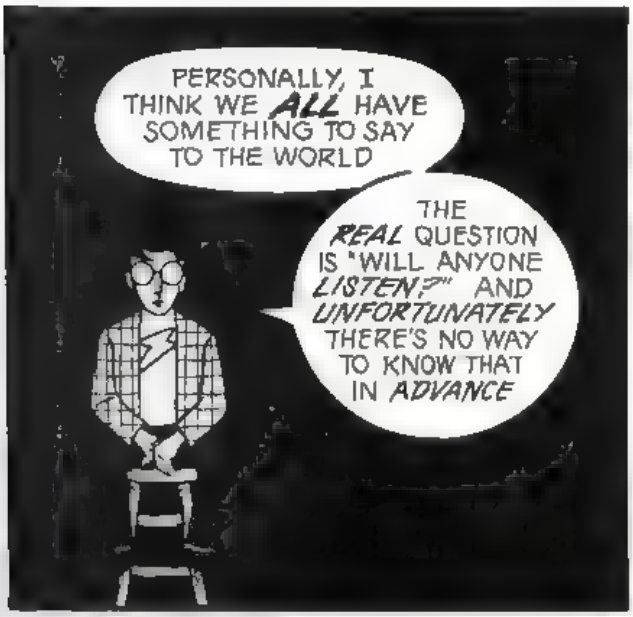
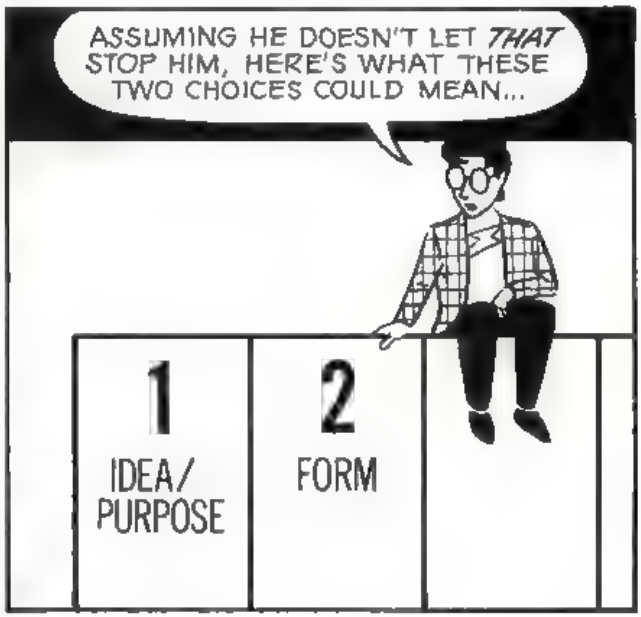
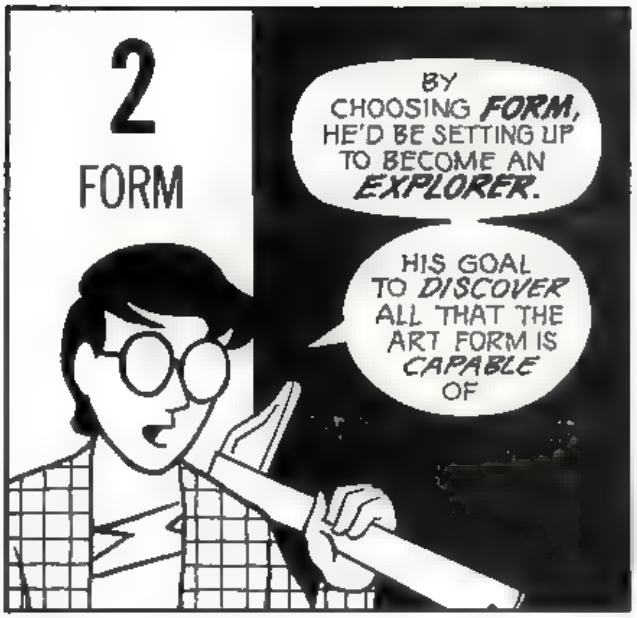
CRAFT
6
SURFACE


AND NOW, THE BIGGEST QUESTION OF ALL- DOES THIS ARTIST WANT TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT LIFE *THROUGH* HIS ART OR DOES HE WANT TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT *ART ITSELF?*
1
2

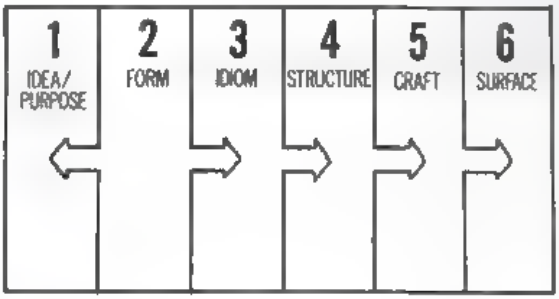

*AND..*
1
2
3
4
5
6
DO I HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY AT ALL?


PERSONALLY, I THINK WE *ALL* HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY TO THE WORLD
THE *REAL* QUESTION IS "WILL ANYONE *LISTEN?*" AND *UNFORTUNATELY* THERE'S NO WAY TO KNOW THAT IN *ADVANCE*


ASSUMING HE DOESN'T LET *THAT* STOP HIM, HERE'S WHAT THESE TWO CHOICES COULD MEAN...
1
IDEA/ PURPOSE
2
FORM

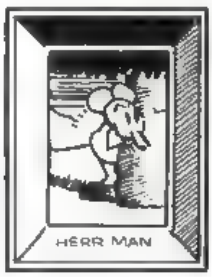



AND HIS ART WOULD NOT *LACK* FOR *IDEAS* OR FOR A *PURPOSE*.

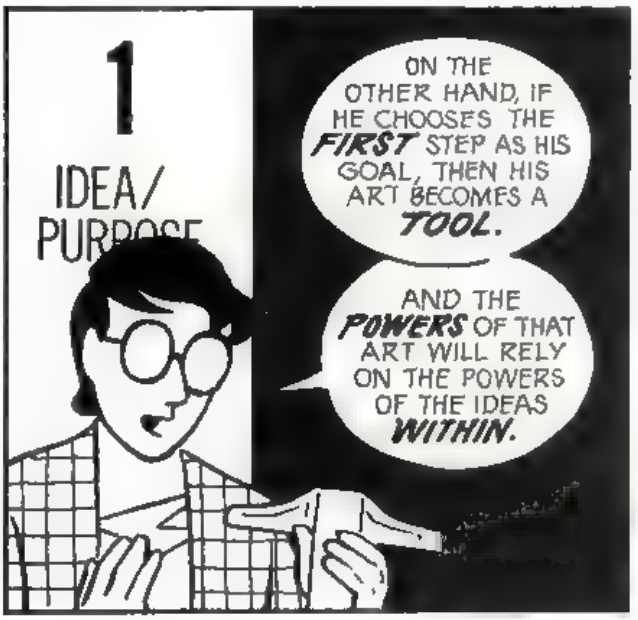



HIS ART WOULD JUST ***BECOME*** HIS PURPOSE AND THE IDEAS WOULD ARRIVE IN TIME TO GIVE IT *SUBSTANCE*.

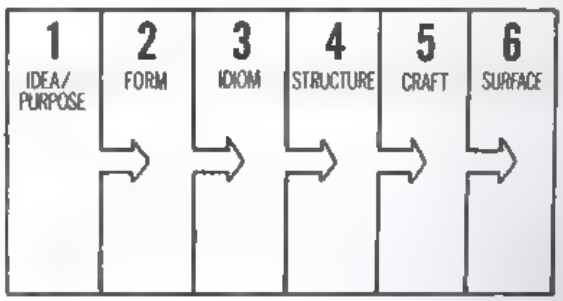
CREATORS WHO TAKE THIS PATH ARE OFTEN *PIONEERS AND REVOLUTIONARIES*--ARTISTS WHO WANT TO ***SHAKE THINGS UP***, CHANGE THE WAY PEOPLE *THINK*, QUESTION THE *FUNDAMENTAL LAWS* THAT GOVERN THEIR CHOSEN ART.



(IN *OTHER* ART FORMS STRAVINSKY, PICASSO, VIRGINIA WOOLF, ORSON WELLES, ETC.)


1
IDEA/ PURPOSE
ON THE OTHER HAND, IF HE CHOOSES THE FIRST STEP AS HIS GOAL, THEN HIS ART BECOMES A TOOL.
AND THE POWERS OF THAT ART WILL RELY ON THE POWERS OF THE IDEAS WITHIN.

NOW *"TELLING THE STORY"* (OR IN THE CASE OF *NON-FICTION*, *"DELIVERING THE MESSAGE"*) TAKES *PRIORITY* OVER *INVENTION*.

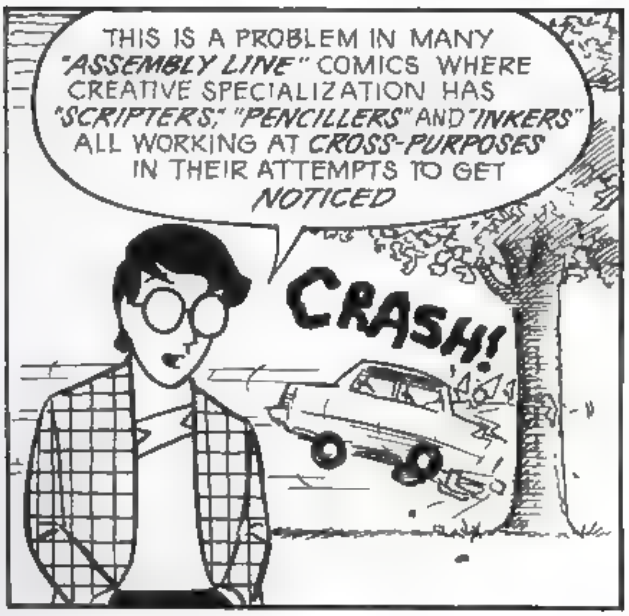



BUT TELLING A STORY AS ***EFFECTIVELY*** AS POSSIBLE MAY ***REQUIRE*** *SOME* INVENTION. IT OFTEN *DOES*.

THIS IS THE PATH OF GREAT ***STORYTELLERS***, CREATORS WHO HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY *THROUGH* COMICS AND DEVOTE ALL THEIR ENERGIES TO *CONTROLLING* THEIR MEDIUM, REFINING ITS ABILITY TO CONVEY MESSAGES *EFFECTIVELY*.

(IN OTHER ART FORMS: CAPRA, DICKENS, WOODY GUTHRIE, EDWARD R MURROW, ETC)

***NO*** WORK OF ART CAN BE *TOTALLY* WITHOUT *"CONTENT"* ANY MORE THAN IT CAN EXIST WITHOUT A *FORM!* BUT IT DOES HELP TO SET SOME *PRIORITIES*.
HEY, I'M DRIVING!
NO, I'M DRIVING!

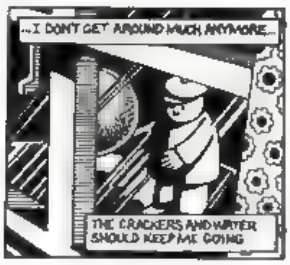

THIS IS A PROBLEM IN MANY *"ASSEMBLY LINE"* COMICS WHERE CREATIVE SPECIALIZATION HAS *"SCRIPTERS," "PENCILLERS"* AND *"INKERS"* ALL WORKING AT *CROSS-PURPOSES* IN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO GET *NOTICED*
CRASH!

NOT THAT WE *"CREATOR/WRITER/ARTIST"* TYPES NEVER RUN INTO THIS PROBLEM...
*DAMN!* NEEDED TO HAVE SOME MORE *DIALOGUE* HERE, BUT I REALLY WANT TO DRAW THAT SNAZZY *CLOSE-UP!*

THE MORE AN ARTIST DEVOTES HIM/HERSELF TO EITHER OF THESE TWO FOCAL POINTS, THE MORE DRAMATIC THE CHANGE IF HE/SHE DECIDES TO *SWITCH!*

ART SPIEGELMAN'S AGGRESSIVELY EXPERIMENTAL WORK OF THE *SEVENTIES* AND EARLY *EIGHTIES* LEFT NO ONE PREPARED FOR THE UNASSUMING *"REPORT"* STYLE OF HIS LANDMARK BIOGRAPHY *"MAUS"*

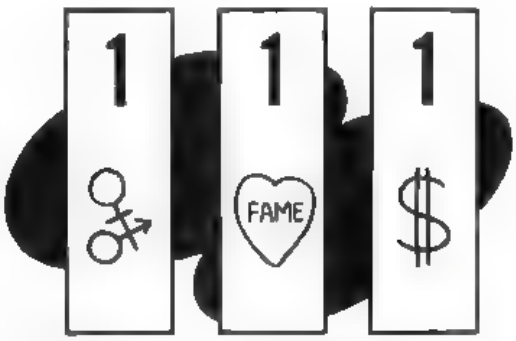
**2** FORM




**1** IDEA/ PURPOSE

ART AND SCRIPT © ART SPIEGELMAN

PERHAPS IF STRIPPED DOWN FAR ENOUGH, MOST ARTISTS' ULTIMATE GOALS ARE NOT THAT DIFFERENT FROM ANYONE ELSE'S EVEN FOR THOSE WITH *HIGH IDEALS,* BASIC INSTINCTS EXERT A POWERFUL ATTRACTION.

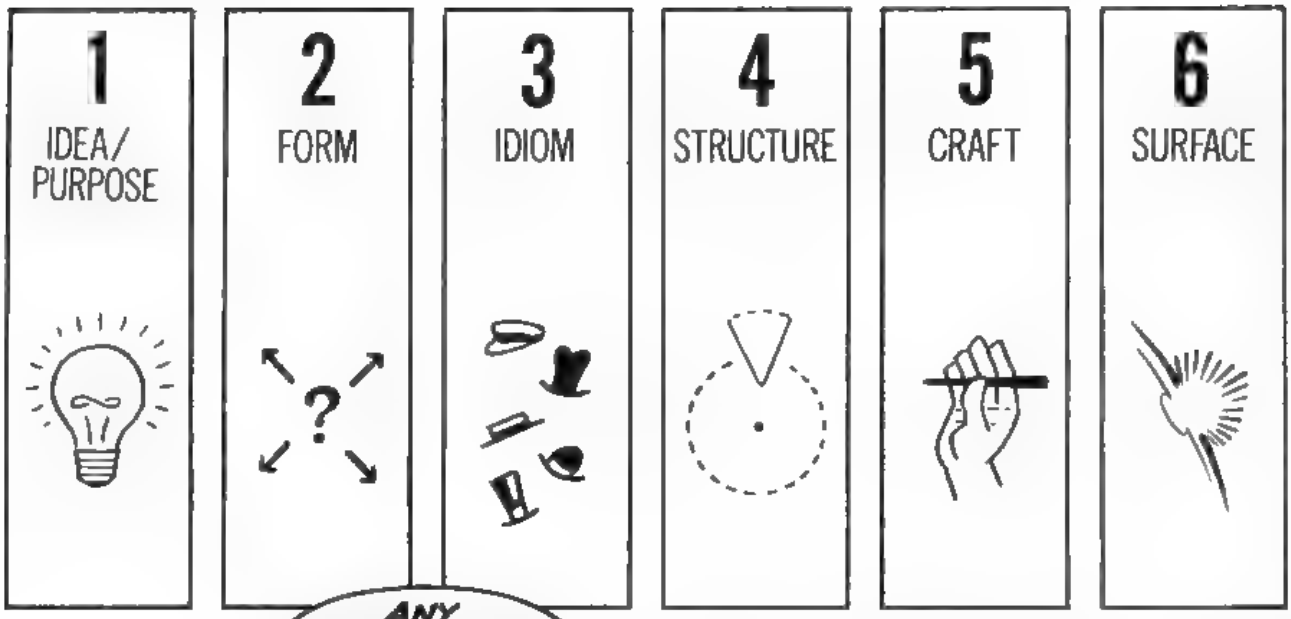



AND WHEN ART BECOMES A *JOB* OR A MATTER OF *SOCIAL STATUS* THE POTENTIAL FOR CONFUSING ONE'S GOALS GOES UP CONSIDERABLY.

BUT EVEN IF WE TAKE LIFE'S *DISTRACTIONS* INTO ACCOUNT, IT'S STILL AMAZING HOW MUCH *TIME* AND *EFFORT* IS SPENT BY COMICS CREATORS TRYING TO GET WHAT THEY WANT OUT OF COMICS--

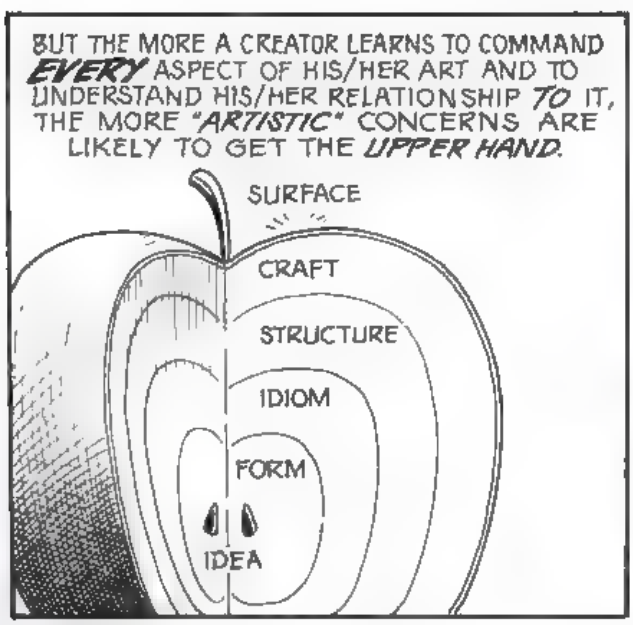
--BEFORE THEY EVEN KNOW *WHAT* THEY WANT!

OF COURSE, NOT *EVERYBODY* TAKES THE *LONG* WAY AROUND. SOME ARTISTS HAVE NO TROUBLE SETTING GOALS AND *ACHIEVING* THEM WITHOUT ANY *DETOURS.*


1
IDEA/ PURPOSE
2
FORM
3
IDIOM
4
STRUCTURE
5
CRAFT
6
SURFACE

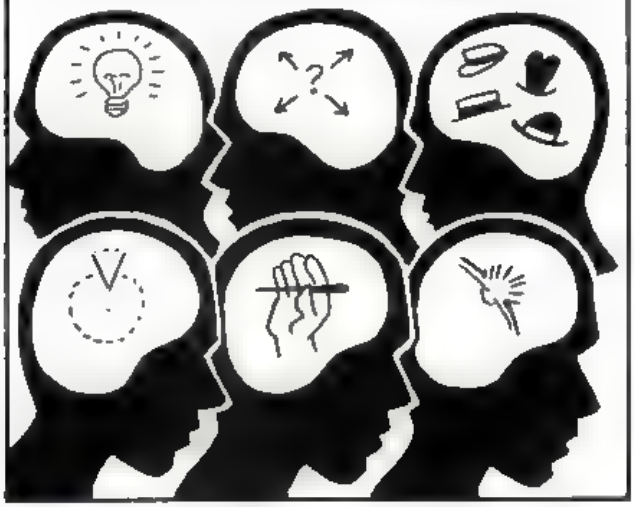
ANY ARTIST CREATING ANY WORK IN ANY MEDIUM WILL ALWAYS FOLLOW THESE SIX STEPS WHETHER THEY REALIZE IT OR NOT.
ALL WORKS BEGIN WITH A PURPOSE. HOWEVER ARBITRARY; ALL TAKE SOME FORM; ALL BELONG TO AN IDIOM (EVEN IF IT'S AN IDIOM OF ONE); ALL POSSESS A STRUCTURE, ALL REQUIRE SOME CRAFT; ALL PRESENT A SURFACE.

AND ALL ASPECTS OF COMICS HAVE THE POTENTIAL FOR SELF-EXPRESSION, EVEN WHEN ECONOMIC SURVIVAL IS THE ARTIST'S MAIN CONCERN
THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF "ART."

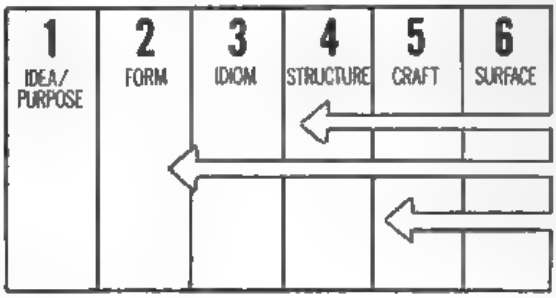

BUT THE MORE A CREATOR LEARNS TO COMMAND EVERY ASPECT OF HIS/HER ART AND TO UNDERSTAND HIS/HER RELATIONSHIP TO IT, THE MORE "ARTISTIC" CONCERNS ARE LIKELY TO GET THE UPPER HAND.
SURFACE
CRAFT
STRUCTURE
IDIOM
FORM
IDEA

THE ORDER OF THE SIX STEPS IS INNATE. LIKE THE ARRANGEMENT OF BONES IN A DINOSAUR'S SKELETON, THEY CAN BE DISCOVERED IN ANY ORDER, BUT WHEN BROUGHT TOGETHER, THEY WILL ALWAYS FALL INTO PLACE!

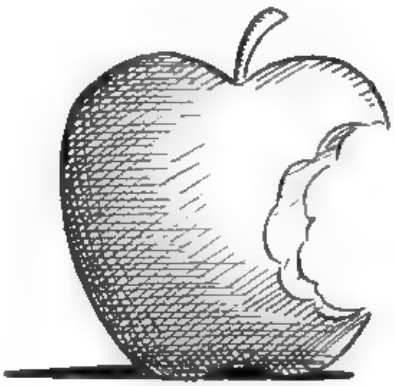
IN *PRACTICE*, ***ANY*** ASPECT OF COMICS MAY BE THE ONE WHICH FIRST DRAWS AN ARTIST INTO ITS ORBIT



STILL, THE LEARNING PROCESS FOR MOST ARTISTS IS A *SLOW AND STEADY JOURNEY* FROM ***END*** TO ***BEGINNING,***




FROM ***SURFACE*** TO ***CORE.***



AND IT'S AT THE ***CORE*** OF ART THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION IS FINALLY ASKED:

1

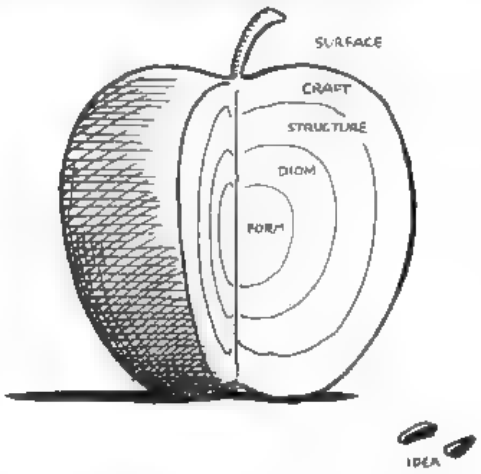
IDEA/ PURPOSE

2

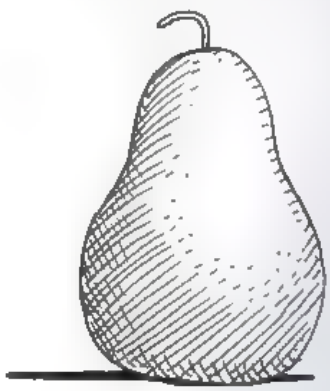
FORM

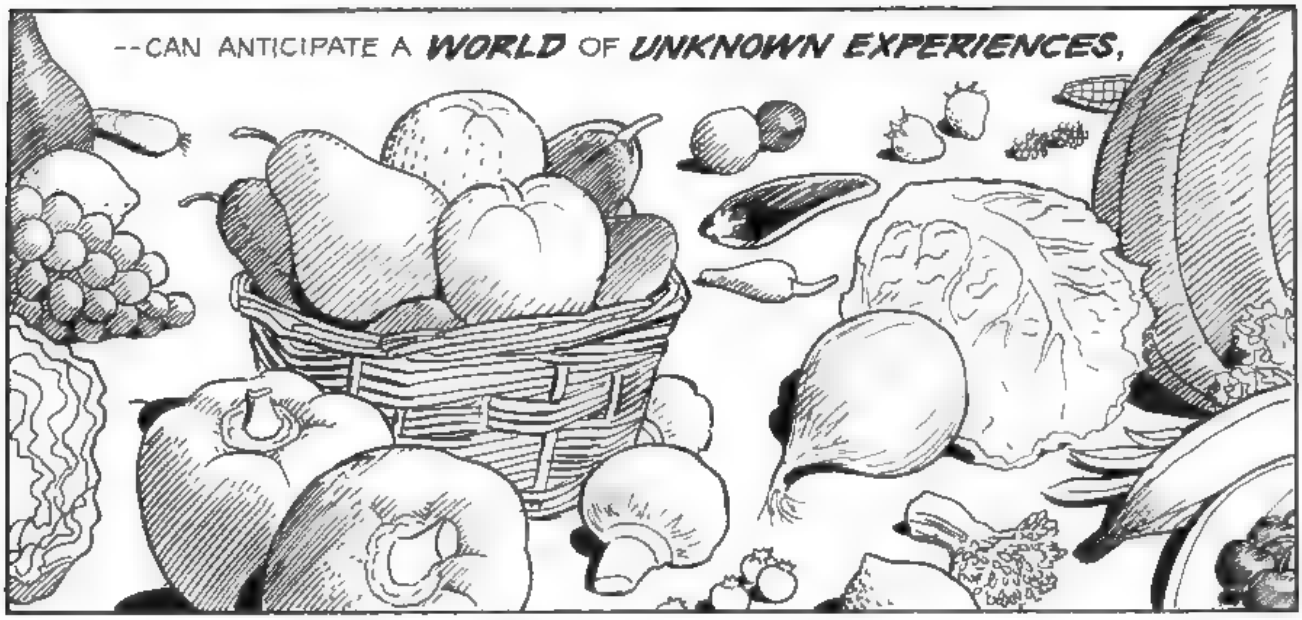
***"WHY AM I DOING THIS?"***

WHEN ***FORM*** RULES THE WORK, IT MAY SEEM SOMEWHAT ***ARTIFICIAL*** AT THE CORE, LIKE A *SEEDLESS FRUIT.*

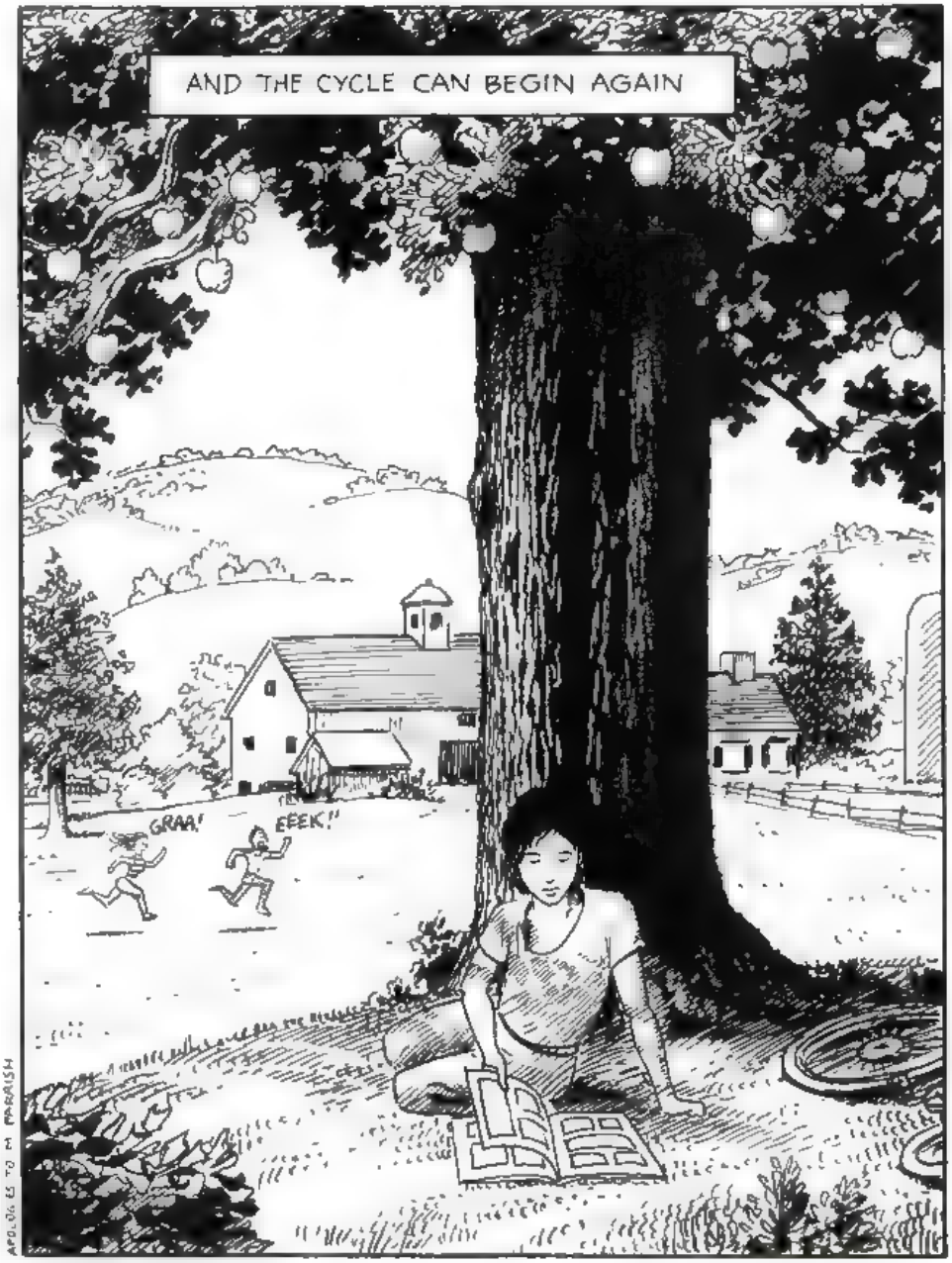



BUT SUCH WORKS DON'T TAKE THE ***SHAPE*** OF ART FOR GRANTED AND BY QUESTIONING OUR *FUNDAMENTAL ASSUMPTIONS--*




--CAN ANTICIPATE A WORLD OF UNKNOWN EXPERIENCES,

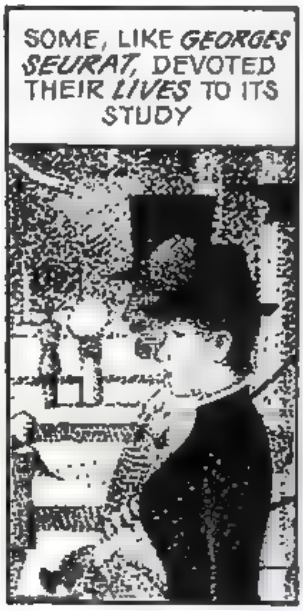
WHILE IF IDEAS RULE THE WORK AND DETERMINE ITS SHAPE, COMICS CAN HELP PLANT THOSE IDEAS FAR AND WIDE.


AND THE CYCLE CAN BEGIN AGAIN
GRAA!
EEEK!"
APOLOGIES TO M. MARAISH

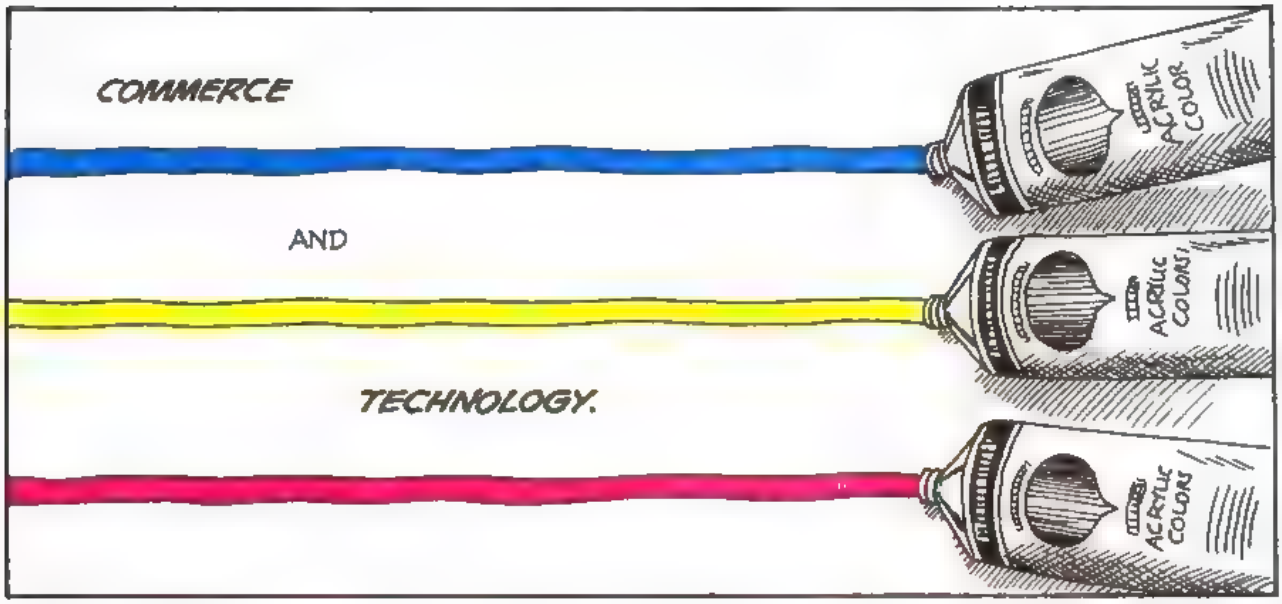
# CHAPTER EIGHT

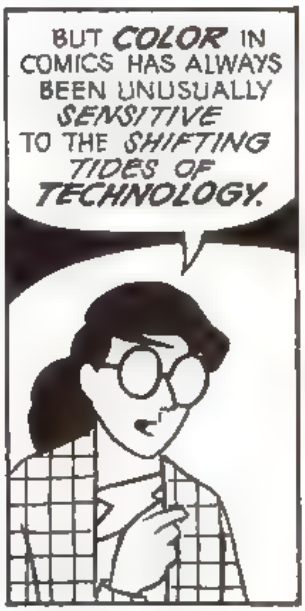
## A WORD ABOUT COLOR.

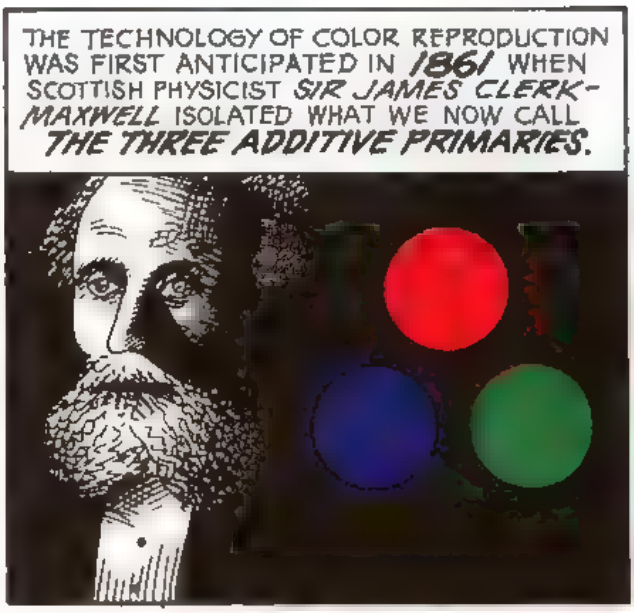
IN CHAPTER FIVE WE DEALT WITH THE EXPRESSIONISTIC POTENTIAL OF *LINES* AS ANTICIPATED BY ARTISTS AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, BUT OF COURSE IT WAS *COLOR* WHICH MOST CAPTIVATED ARTISTS OF THAT ERA.

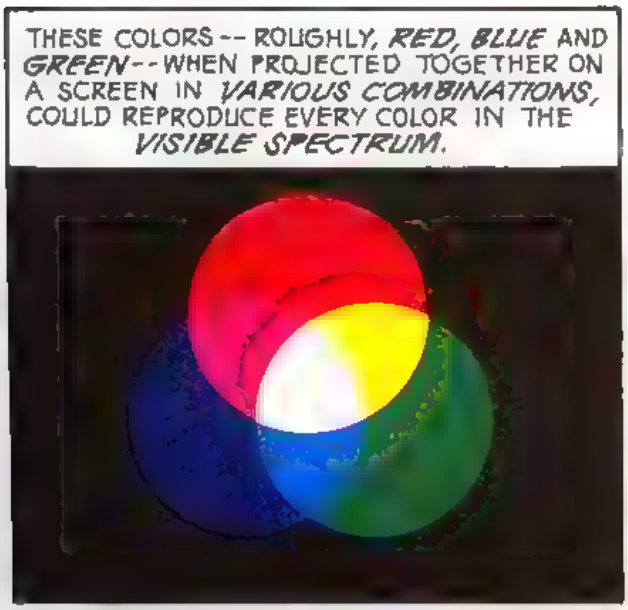


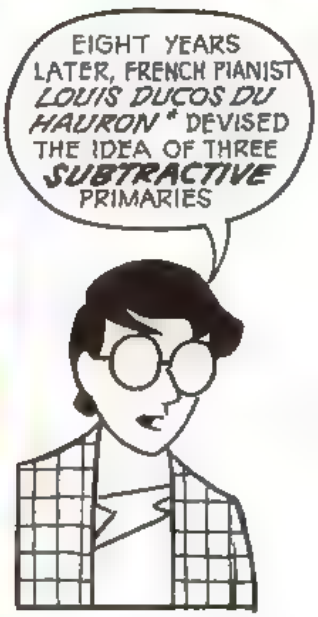
*OTHERS,* LIKE *KANDINSKY,* BELIEVED THAT COLORS COULD HAVE PROFOUND *PHYSICAL* AND *EMOTIONAL EFFECTS* ON PEOPLE.
THESE YELLOW WALLS MAKE ME UNCOMFORTABLE! M-M-MARY





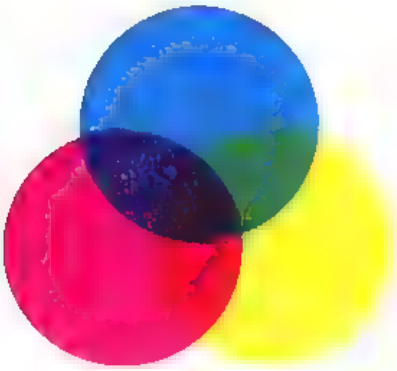


THE TECHNOLOGY OF COLOR REPRODUCTION WAS FIRST ANTICIPATED IN 1861 WHEN SCOTTISH PHYSICIST SIR JAMES CLERK-MAXWELL ISOLATED WHAT WE NOW CALL THE THREE ADDITIVE PRIMARIES.


THESE COLORS -- ROUGHLY, RED, BLUE AND GREEN -- WHEN PROJECTED TOGETHER ON A SCREEN IN VARIOUS COMBINATIONS, COULD REPRODUCE EVERY COLOR IN THE VISIBLE SPECTRUM.



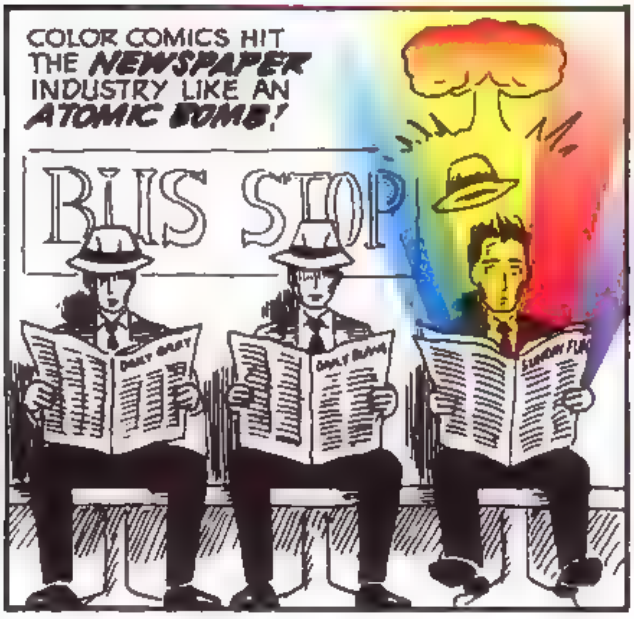

* WHOM I DON'T HAVE A PICTURE OF

THESE COLORS -- CYAN, MAGENTA AND YELLOW* -- CAN ALSO MIX TO PRODUCE ANY HUE IN THE VISIBLE SPECTRUM. BUT RATHER THAN ADDING LIGHT, THESE THREE DO IT BY FILTERING IT OUT!

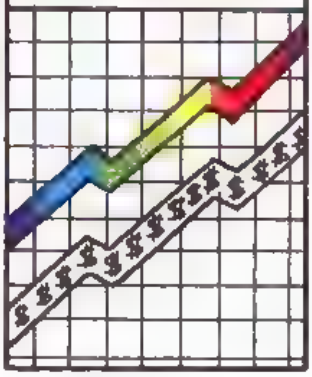


THIS SUBTRACTIVE EFFECT WAS ACHIEVED THROUGH TRANSPARENT SUBSTANCES SUCH AS CELLOPHANE, COLORED GLASS, WATER COLORS --

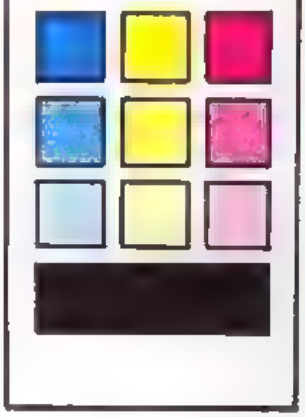
COLOR COMICS HIT THE NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY LIKE AN ATOMIC BOMB!




COLOR BOOSTED SALES, BUT IT ALSO BOOSTED COSTS! MEASURES WERE TAKEN TO STREAMLINE THE PROCESS AND MAKE IT MORE COST-EFFECTIVE.



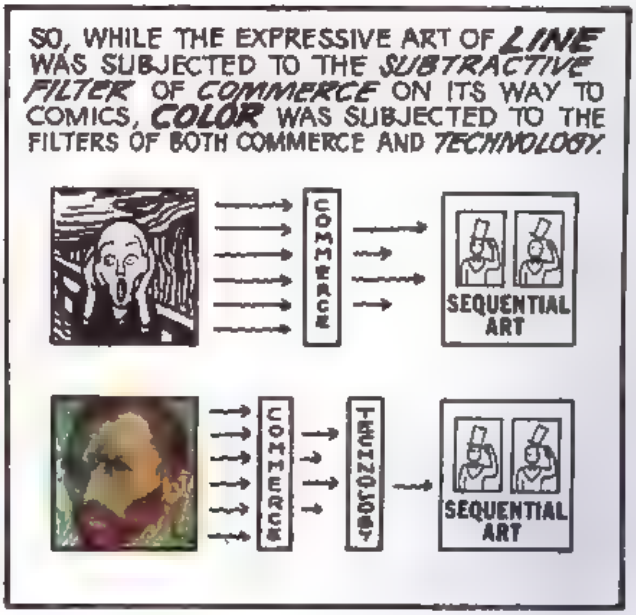
AND THE STANDARD "FOUR COLOR" PROCESS TOOK OVER.



THIS PROCESS RESTRICTED THE INTENSITY OF THE THREE PRIMARIES TO 100%, 50% ND 20%, USING BLACK INK FOR THE LINE WORK.

THE LOOK OF THESE COLORS, HELD BY BOLD, SIMPLE OUTLINES, AND REPRODUCED ON CHEAP NEWSPRINT EVENTUALLY BECAME THE LOOK OF COMICS IN AMERICA.

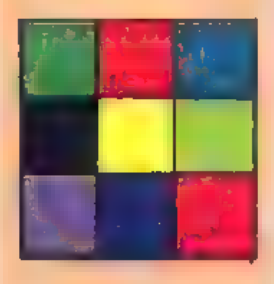
SO, WHILE THE EXPRESSIVE ART OF LINE WAS SUBJECTED TO THE SUBTRACTIVE FILTER OF COMMERCE ON ITS WAY TO COMICS, COLOR WAS SUBJECTED TO THE FILTERS OF BOTH COMMERCE AND TECHNOLOGY.



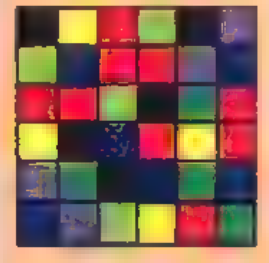

* FOR OPAQUE PIGMENTS: RED, YELLOW AND BLUE. I KNOW, IT'S TOTALLY WEIRD.

TO COUNTERACT THE DULLING EFFECTS OF NEWSPRINT AND TO STAND OUT FROM THE COMPETITION, COSTUMED HEROES WERE CLAD IN *BRIGHT, PRIMARY COLORS* AND FOUGHT IN A *BRIGHT PRIMARY WORLD!*

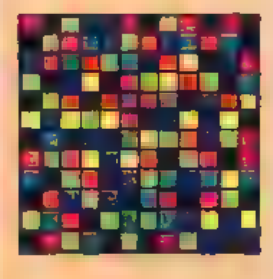
THE COLORS WERE PICKED FOR *STRENGTH* AND CONTRASTED STRONGLY WITH ONE ANOTHER, BUT ON MOST PAGES NO ONE COLOR *DOMINATED.*



WITHOUT THE *EMOTIONAL IMPACT* OF *SINGLE-COLOR SATURATION,* THE *EXPRESSIVE POTENTIAL* OF AMERICAN COLOR COMICS--



--WAS OFTEN *CANCELLED OUT* TO AN *EMOTIONAL GREY.*



AS ALWAYS, THERE WERE SOME *EXCEPTIONS,* BUT THIS WAS THE OVERALL TREND.

HOWEVER, WHILE COMICS COLORS WERE LESS THAN *EXPRESSIONISTIC,* THEY WERE FIXED WITH A NEW *ICONIC* POWER. BECAUSE COSTUME COLORS REMAINED EXACTLY THE SAME, PANEL AFTER PANEL, THEY CAME TO *SYMBOLIZE* CHARACTERS IN THE MIND OF THE READER.

BATMAN

HULK

MANY SEE THE SUPERHERO AS A FORM OF *MODERN MYTHOLOGY.* IF SO, THIS ASPECT OF COLOR MAY PLAY A PART.

SYMBOLS ARE THE STUFF OF WHICH *GODS* ARE MADE.

*ANOTHER* PROPERTY OF FLAT COLORS IS THEIR TENDENCY TO EMPHASIZE THE *SHAPE* OF OBJECTS, BOTH *ANIMATE* AND *INANIMATE*--

--AS ANY CHILD WHO HAS EVER *"COLORED-BY-NUMBERS"* KNOWS INSTINCTIVELY.

THESE COLORS *OBJECTIFY* THEIR SUBJECTS. WE BECOME MORE AWARE OF THE *PHYSICAL FORM* OF OBJECTS THAN IN *BLACK AND WHITE*.

A GAME IN MOTION BECOMES A BALL IN AIR. A FACE SHOWING EMOTION BECOMES A HEAD AND TWO HANDS.

THE WORLD TAKES ON THE CHILDHOOD REALITY OF THE *PLAYGROUND* AND RECALLS A TIME WHEN SHAPE *PRECEDED* MEANING. OBLONG SWING SETS. CYLINDRICAL JUNGLE GYMS. THE WONDER OF *THINGS!*

DOESN'T IT *FOLLOW* THEN THAT THE MASTERS OF *FLAT-COLOR* COMICS ARE, ABOVE ALL, MASTERS OF *FORM* AND *COMPOSITION?*

KIRBY

McCAY

COLE

FROM *STEVE DITKO* TO *CARL BARKS* TO *F. CRAIG RUSSELL*, THAT LOVE OF SHAPES PERSISTS IN WORLDS FAIRLY *GLOWING* WITH THE MYSTERY OF *FIRST ENCOUNTERS*.

ANY WONDER THEN THAT COMICS IN AMERICA HAS BEEN SO RELUCTANT TO *"GROW UP"?*

IN EUROPE HERGÉ CAPTURED THE MAGIC OF SUCH FLAT COLORS WITH *UNPRECEDENTED SUBTLETY.*

The signora's room.

Ravishing!

HERGÉ CREATED A KIND OF *DEMOCRACY OF FORM* IN WHICH NO SHAPE WAS ANY LESS IMPORTANT THAN ANY *OTHER*-- A *COMPLETELY OBJECTIVE WORLD*

COMICS *PRINTING* WAS *SUPERIOR* IN EUROPE AND FOR HERGÉ, FLAT COLORS WERE A *PREFERENCE*, NOT A NECESSITY.

BUT OTHERS SUCH AS *CLAVELOUX, CAZA* AND *MOEBIUS* SAW IN THEIR SUPERIOR PRINTING AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES THROUGH A MORE INTENSE *SUBJECTIVE* PALETTE.

SOME OF THIS WORK BEGAN REACHING AMERICA IN THE *70's*, INSPIRING MANY YOUNG ARTISTS TO LOOK *BEYOND* THEIR FOUR-COLOR WALLS

HEAVY METAL

VODKA

SUDDENLY IT SEEMED POSSIBLE FOR COLOR TO TAKE ON A *CENTRAL ROLE.*

COLORS COULD EXPRESS A *DOMINANT MOOD.*

TONES AND MODELLING COULD ADD *DEPTH.*

WHOLE *SCENES* COULD BE VIRTUALLY *ABOUT COLOR!*

COLOR AS *SENSATION*, COLOR AS *ENVIRONMENT*.

COLOR AS *COLOR*!

SINCE THE LATE *70's*, MORE AND MORE *"UPSCALE"* COLOR PROJECTS HAVE BEGUN APPEARING IN AMERICA.

SOME PUBLISHERS AT THE BEGINNING TRIED APPLYING THE TRADITIONAL "FOUR-COLOR" PROCESS TO BETTER PAPER WITH *GARISH RESULTS*.

TAKE *THAT!*

WHEN *MODELLING* AND MORE *SUBTLE HUES* WERE APPLIED, THOUGH, THEY SEEMED *OUT OF PLACE* ON THE OLD *SHAPE-SENSITIVE LINE DRAWINGS*.

TAKE *THAT!*

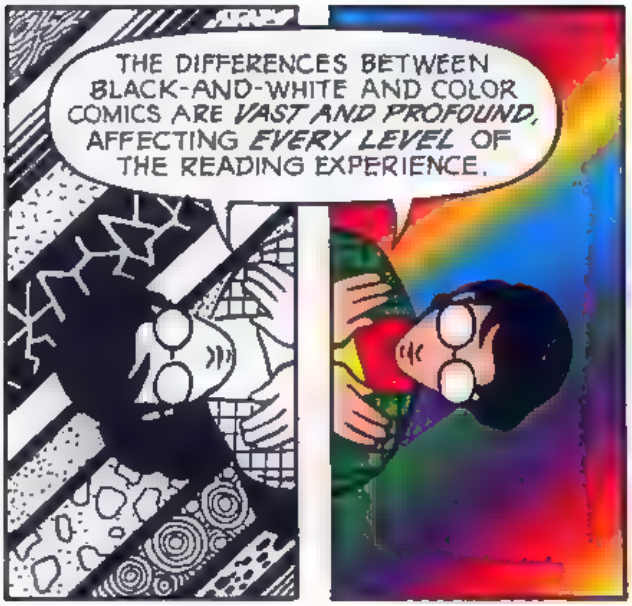
THE ***SURFACE*** WAS CHANGING, BUT NOT THE ***CORE***. FOR ALL THEIR SUBTLE HUES, COMICS WERE STILL BEING WRITTEN IN *PRIMARY COLORS!*

THE NEW ***FORM*** REQUIRED THE CREATION OF NEW *IDIOMS!*

UNFORTUNATELY, COLOR IS STILL AN *EXPENSIVE OPTION* AND HAS HISTORICALLY BEEN IN THE HANDS OF LARGER, MORE CONSERVATIVE PUBLISHERS.

THIS IS BEGINNING TO CHANGE AS I WRITE THIS, BUT IT'S STILL THE *EXCEPTION*, NOT THE *RULE*. COMIC ARTISTS WANTING TO CONDUCT *BOLD NEW EXPERIMENTS* IN COMICS ART--

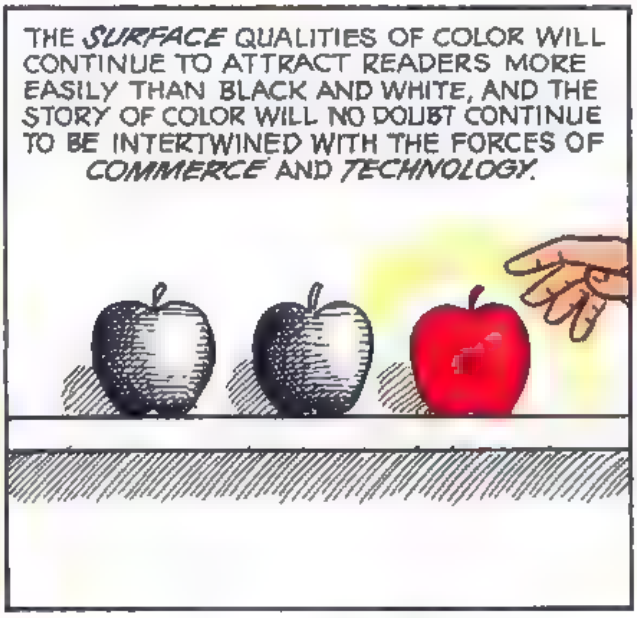
--STILL HAVE TO LEARN IN MOST CASES TO BE BOLD IN *BLACK AND WHITE!*


THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BLACK-AND-WHITE AND COLOR COMICS ARE VAST AND PROFOUND, AFFECTING EVERY LEVEL OF THE READING EXPERIENCE.

IN BLACK AND WHITE, THE IDEAS BEHIND THE ART ARE COMMUNICATED MORE DIRECTLY. MEANING TRANSCENDS FORM. ART APPROACHES LANGUAGE.

IN FLAT COLORS FORMS THEMSELVES TAKE ON MORE SIGNIFICANCE. THE WORLD BECOMES A PLAYGROUND OF SHAPES AND SPACE.

AND THROUGH MORE EXPRESSIVE COLORS, COMICS CAN BECOME AN INTOXICATING ENVIRONMENT OF SENSATIONS THAT ONLY COLOR CAN GIVE

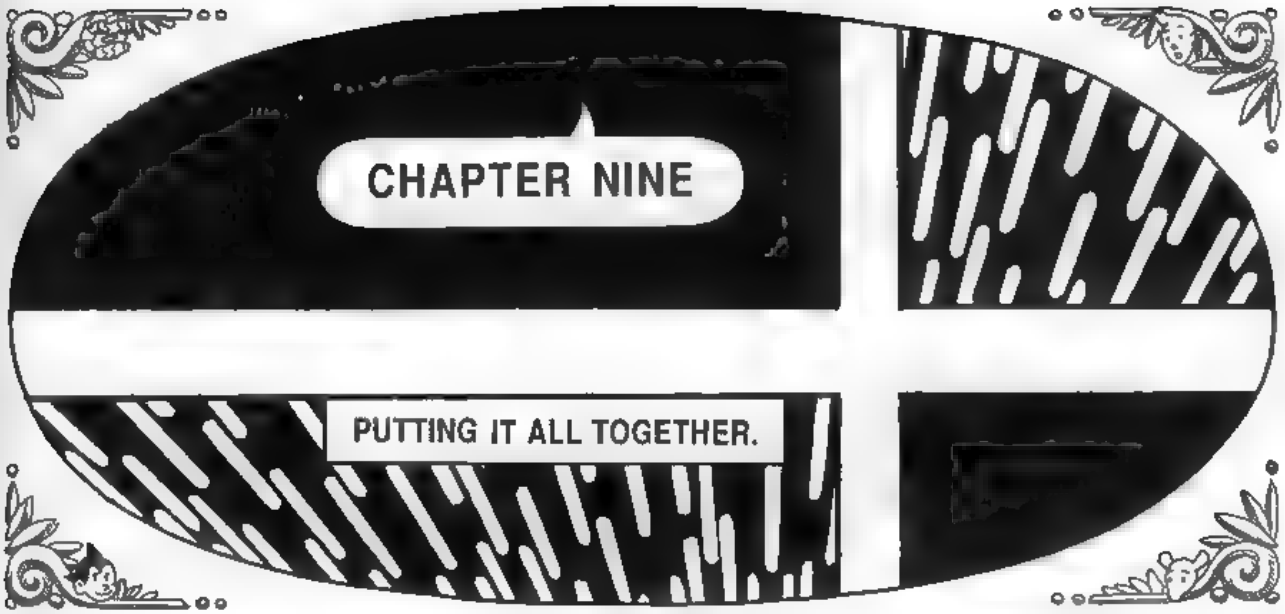

THE SURFACE QUALITIES OF COLOR WILL CONTINUE TO ATTRACT READERS MORE EASILY THAN BLACK AND WHITE, AND THE STORY OF COLOR WILL NO DOUBT CONTINUE TO BE INTERTWINED WITH THE FORCES OF COMMERCE AND TECHNOLOGY.

WE LIVE IN A WORLD OF COLORS, NOT JUST BLACK AND WHITE. COLOR COMICS WILL ALWAYS SEEM MORE "REAL" AT FIRST GLANCE.

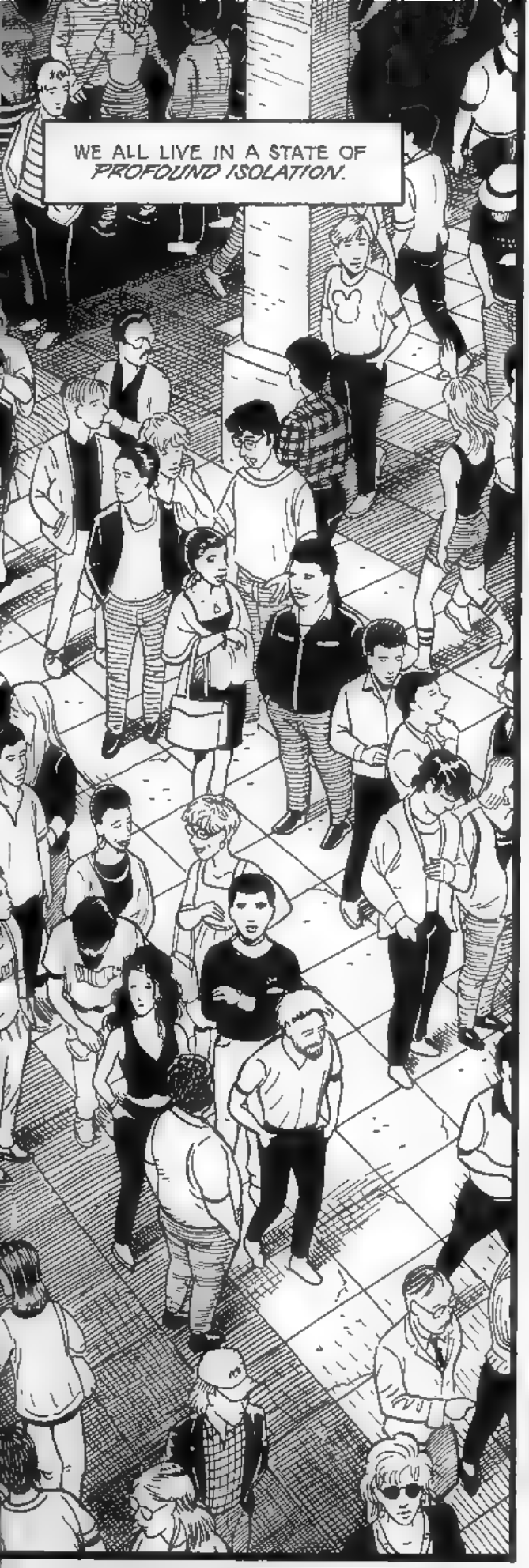
BUT COMICS READERS LOOK FOR MANY THINGS BESIDES "REALITY" AND, TECHNOLOGY NOTWITHSTANDING, COLOR WILL NEVER REPLACE BLACK AND WHITE ENTIRELY

ONE THING'S FOR SURE, THOUGH WHEN USED WELL, COLOR IN COMICS CAN--LIKE COMICS ITSELF--

--AMOUNT TO FAR MORE THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS

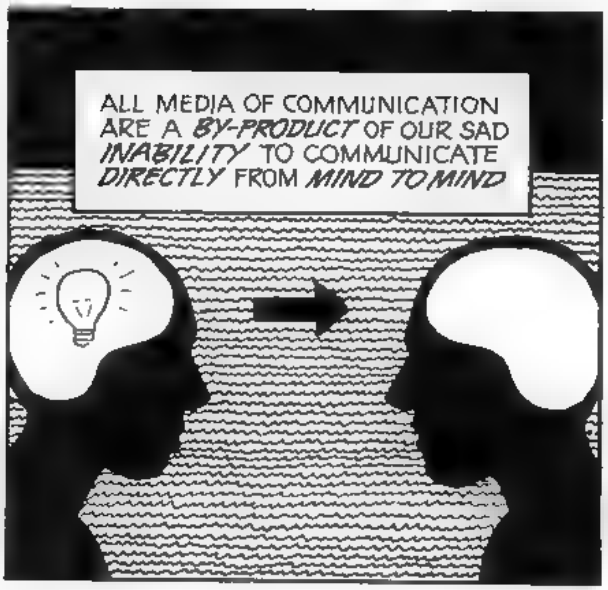

CHAPTER NINE
PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER.

SO, WHY IS THIS MEDIUM WE CALL COMICS SO IMPORTANT? WHY SHOULD WE TRY SO HARD TO UNDERSTAND COMICS?
SEQUENTIAL ART
I THINK THE ANSWER LIES DEEP WITHIN THE HUMAN CONDITION..


WE ALL LIVE IN A STATE OF *PROFOUND ISOLATION.*

NO OTHER HUMAN BEING CAN EVER KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE YOU FROM THE *INSIDE.*

AND NO AMOUNT OF *REACHING OUT* TO *OTHERS* CAN EVER MAKE THEM FEEL EXACTLY WHAT *YOU* FEEL


ALL MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION ARE A *BY-PRODUCT* OF OUR SAD *INABILITY* TO COMMUNICATE *DIRECTLY* FROM *MIND TO MIND*

SAD, OF COURSE, BECAUSE NEARLY ALL PROBLEMS IN HUMAN HISTORY *STEM* FROM THAT INABILITY.

EACH *MEDIUM* (THE TERM COMES FROM THE LATIN WORD MEANING *MIDDLE*) SERVES AS A BRIDGE *BETWEEN* MINDS.

SPOKEN WORD

MEDIA CONVERT THOUGHTS INTO FORMS THAT CAN TRAVERSE THE *PHYSICAL WORLD* AND BE *RE*-CONVERTED BY ONE OR MORE SENSES *BACK* INTO THOUGHTS.

ABC

WRITTEN WORD

MUSIC

CINEMA

IN *COMICS* THE CONVERSION FOLLOWS A PATH FROM *MIND* TO *HAND* TO *PAPER* TO *EYE* TO *MIND*.

IDEALLY THE ARTIST'S "*MESSAGE*" WILL RUN THIS GAUNTLET WITHOUT BEING *AFFECTED* BY IT, BUT IN *PRACTICE* THIS IS RARELY THE CASE

THE COMICS I "SEE" IN MY MIND WILL NEVER BE SEEN IN THEIR ENTIRETY BY ANYONE ELSE, NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRY
OCTOBER

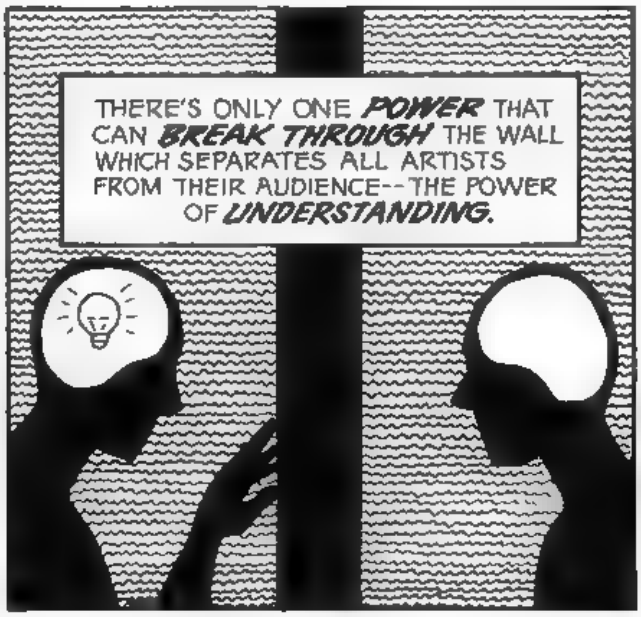
ASK ANY WRITER OR FILMMAKER OR PAINTER JUST HOW MUCH OF A GIVEN PROJECT TRULY REPRESENTS WHAT HE/SHE ENVISIONED IT TO BE

YOU'LL HEAR TWENTY PERCENT. TEN... FIVE...
FEW WILL CLAIM MORE THAN THIRTY.

THE MASTERY OF ONE'S MEDIUM IS THE DEGREE TO WHICH THAT PERCENTAGE CAN BE INCREASED, THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE ARTIST'S IDEAS SURVIVE THE JOURNEY--

--OR, FOR SOME ARTISTS, THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE INEVITABLE DETOURS ARE MADE USEFUL BY THE ARTIST

AS I SAID IN CHAPTER SEVEN, I BELIEVE WE ALL HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY TO THE WORLD. I'M A FIRM BELIEVER IN THE INHERENT WORTH OF ALL INNER TRUTHS.


THERE'S ONLY ONE POWER THAT CAN BREAK THROUGH THE WALL WHICH SEPARATES ALL ARTISTS FROM THEIR AUDIENCE--THE POWER OF UNDERSTANDING.

UNDERSTANDING COMICS IS *SERIOUS BUSINESS.*

TODAY, COMICS IS ONE OF THE VERY FEW FORMS OF *MASS COMMUNICATION* IN WHICH *INDIVIDUAL VOICES* STILL HAVE A CHANCE TO BE *HEARD*

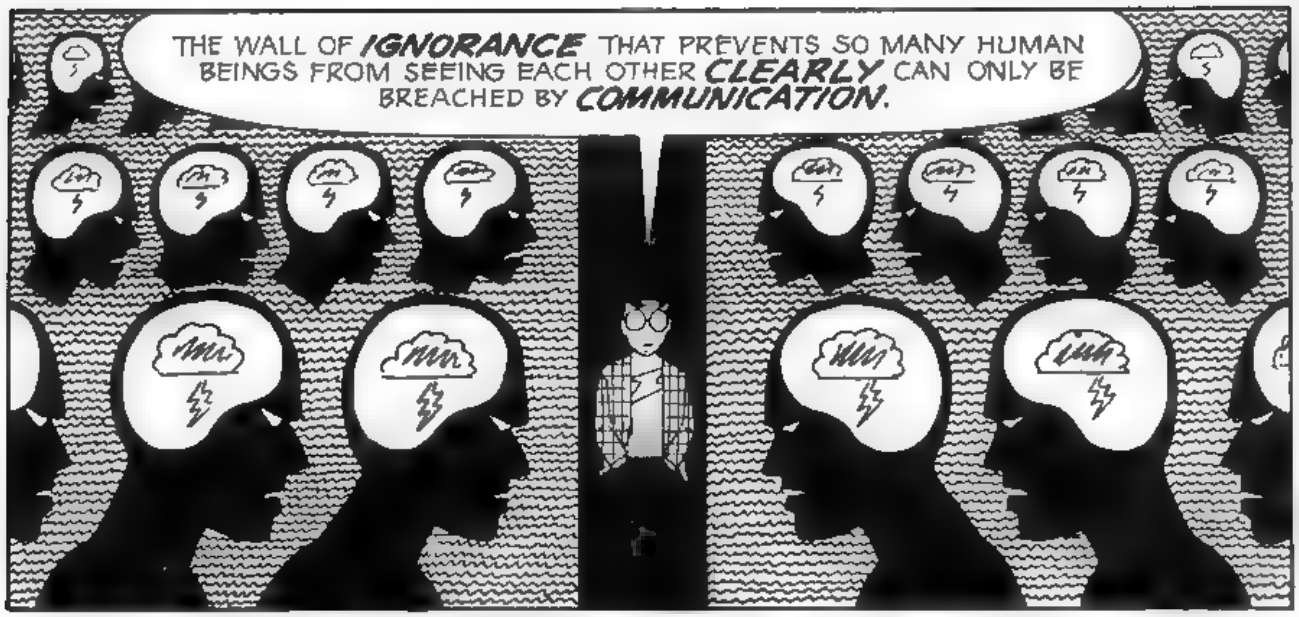
THOSE OF US WHO TACKLE THE *BUSINESS* OF COMICS HAVE MANY OBSTACLES TO OVERCOME--

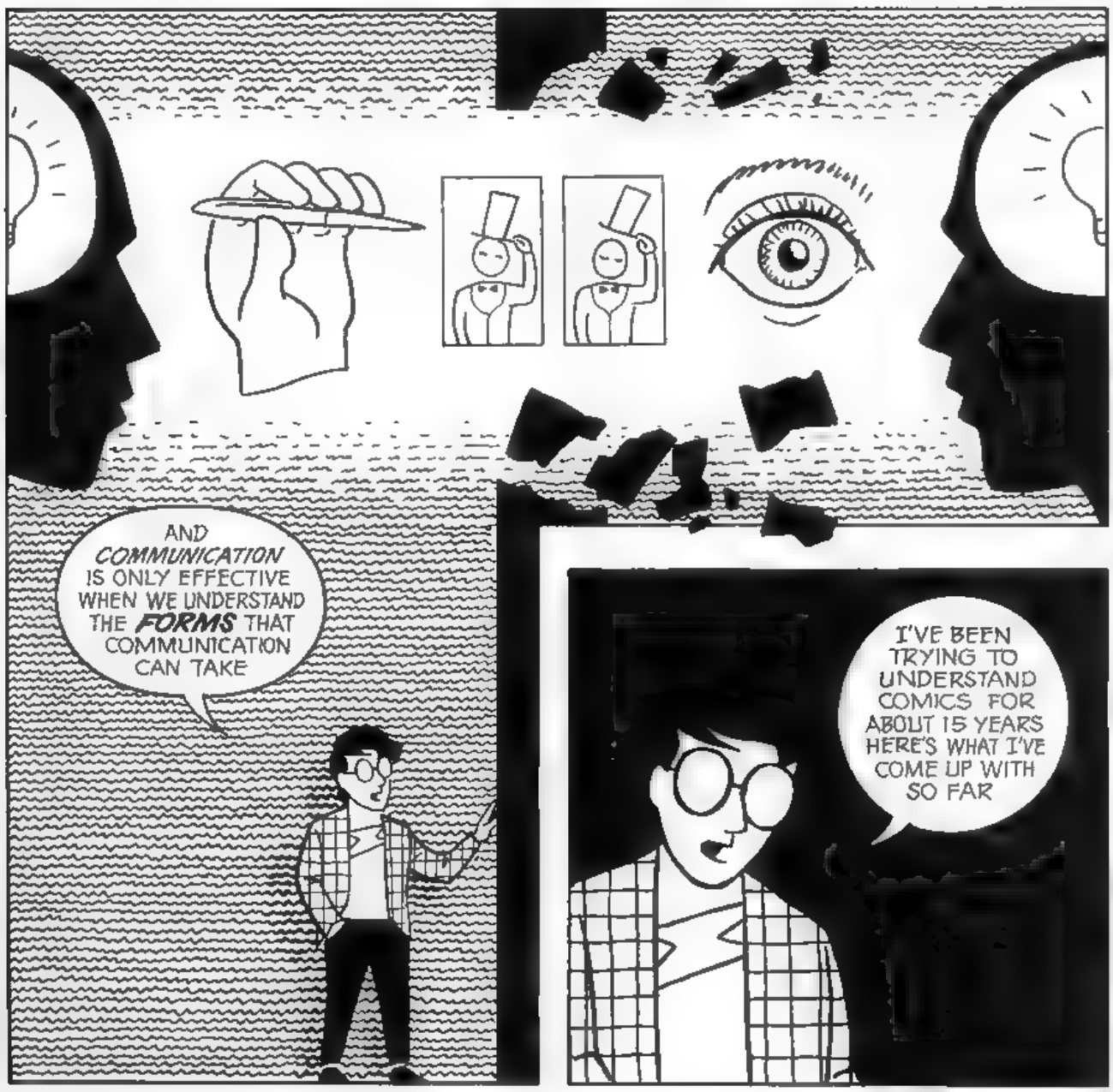
--BUT THEY *PALE* IN COMPARISON TO WHAT A *FILMMAKER* OR *PLAYWRIGHT* HAS TO CONTEND WITH

COMICS WELCOMES *ANY* WRITER OR ARTIST TO STEP INTO ITS WORLD, A WORLD AS CLOSE AS *PEN* OR *PENCIL* AND *PAPER.*

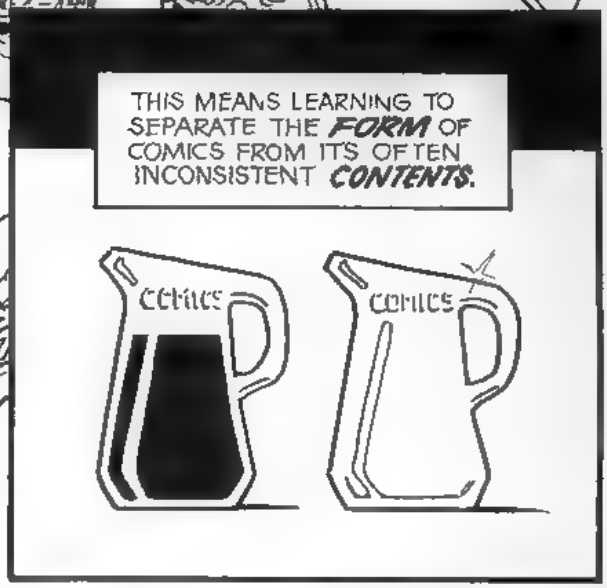
KOH-I-NOOR

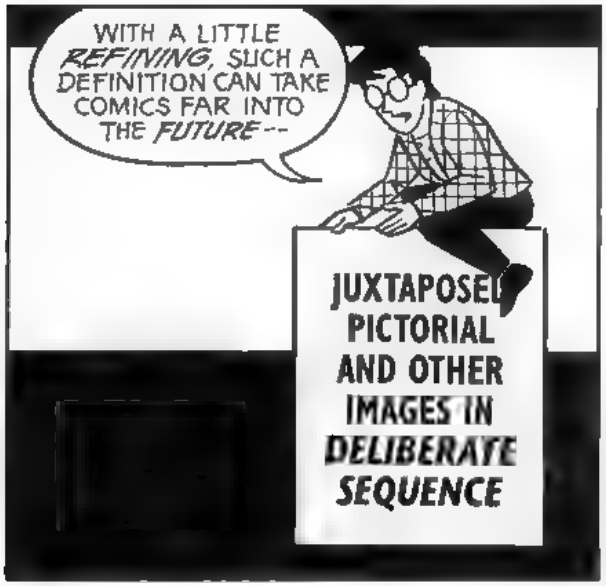
AND NO, THEY DON'T HAVE TO BE *THESE* TYPES OF PENS AND PENCILS

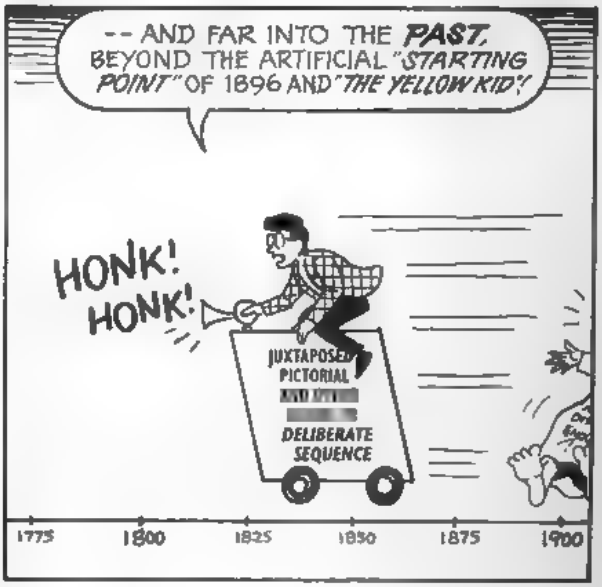

THE WALL OF IGNORANCE THAT PREVENTS SO MANY HUMAN BEINGS FROM SEEING EACH OTHER CLEARLY CAN ONLY BE BREACHED BY COMMUNICATION.


AND COMMUNICATION IS ONLY EFFECTIVE WHEN WE UNDERSTAND THE FORMS THAT COMMUNICATION CAN TAKE
I'VE BEEN TRYING TO UNDERSTAND COMICS FOR ABOUT 15 YEARS HERE'S WHAT I'VE COME UP WITH SO FAR

THE FIRST STEP IN ANY SUCH EFFORT IS TO *CLEAR OUR MINDS* OF ALL PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS ABOUT COMICS.
ONLY BY *STARTING FROM SCRATCH* CAN WE DISCOVER THE FULL RANGE OF POSSIBILITIES COMICS OFFER




WITH A LITTLE *REFINING,* SUCH A DEFINITION CAN TAKE COMICS FAR INTO THE *FUTURE*--
JUXTAPOSED PICTORIAL AND OTHER IMAGES IN *DELIBERATE SEQUENCE*




SEE PAGE 216 FOR COPYRIGHT INFORMATION.

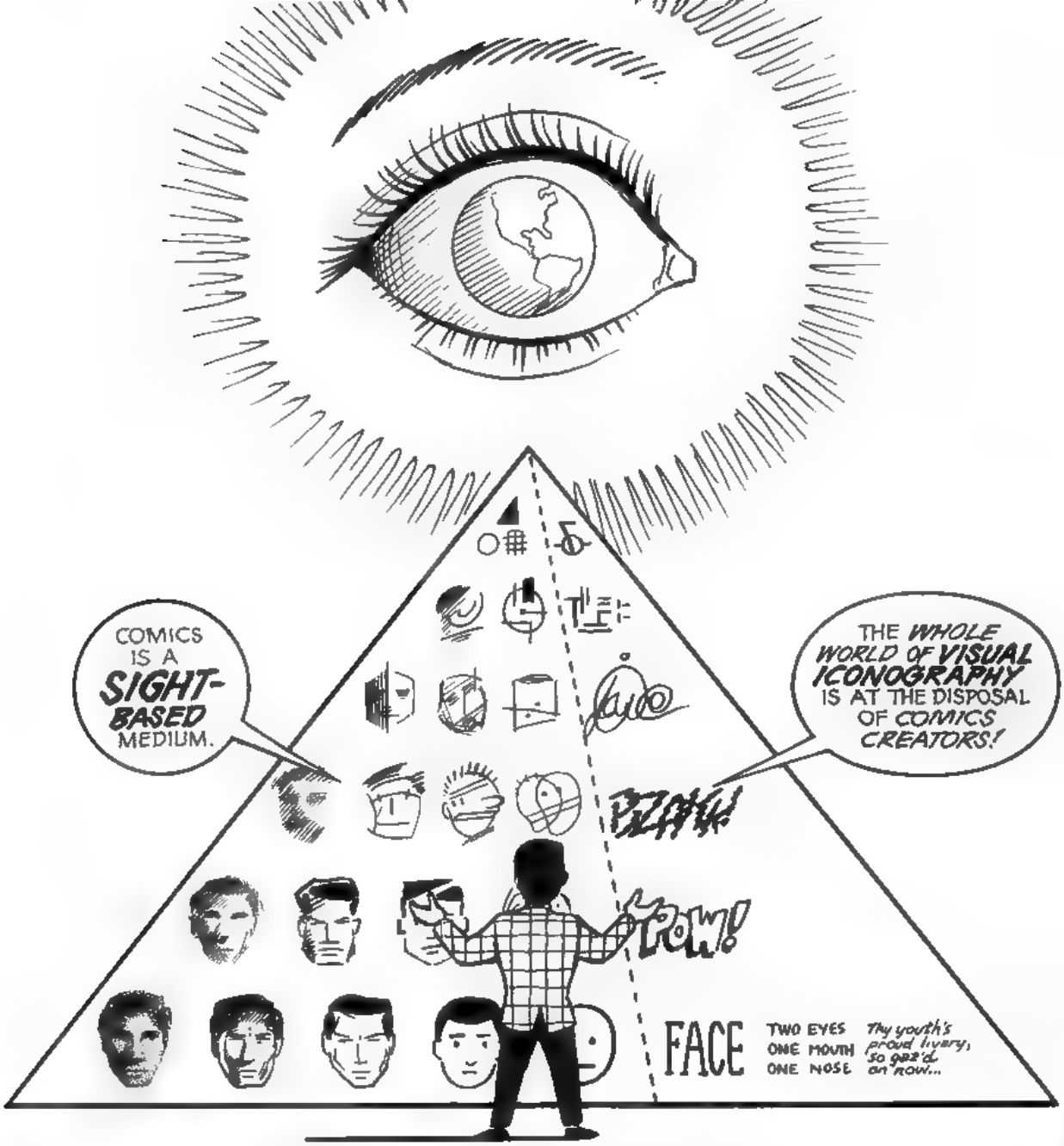
OVER THREE THOUSAND YEARS BEYOND!
THERE'S AN INCREDIBLE WEALTH OF ANCIENT COMICS AND SOME MAY YET HOLD THE KEY TO COMICS' FUTURE!
DISCOVERING AND CATALOGUING THIS WORK HAS ALREADY BEGUN! BUT THERE'S MUCH MORE THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE!
THERE'S A BIG GAPING HOLE IN THE OFFICIAL HISTORY OF ART AND IT'S HIGH TIME SOMEBODY FILLED IT!

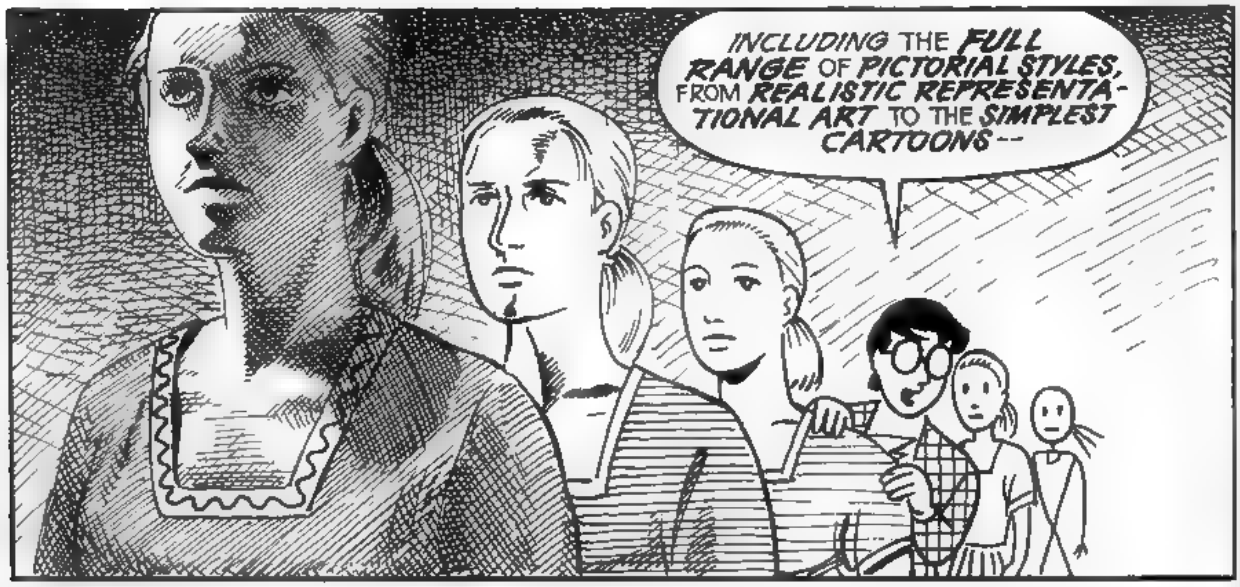


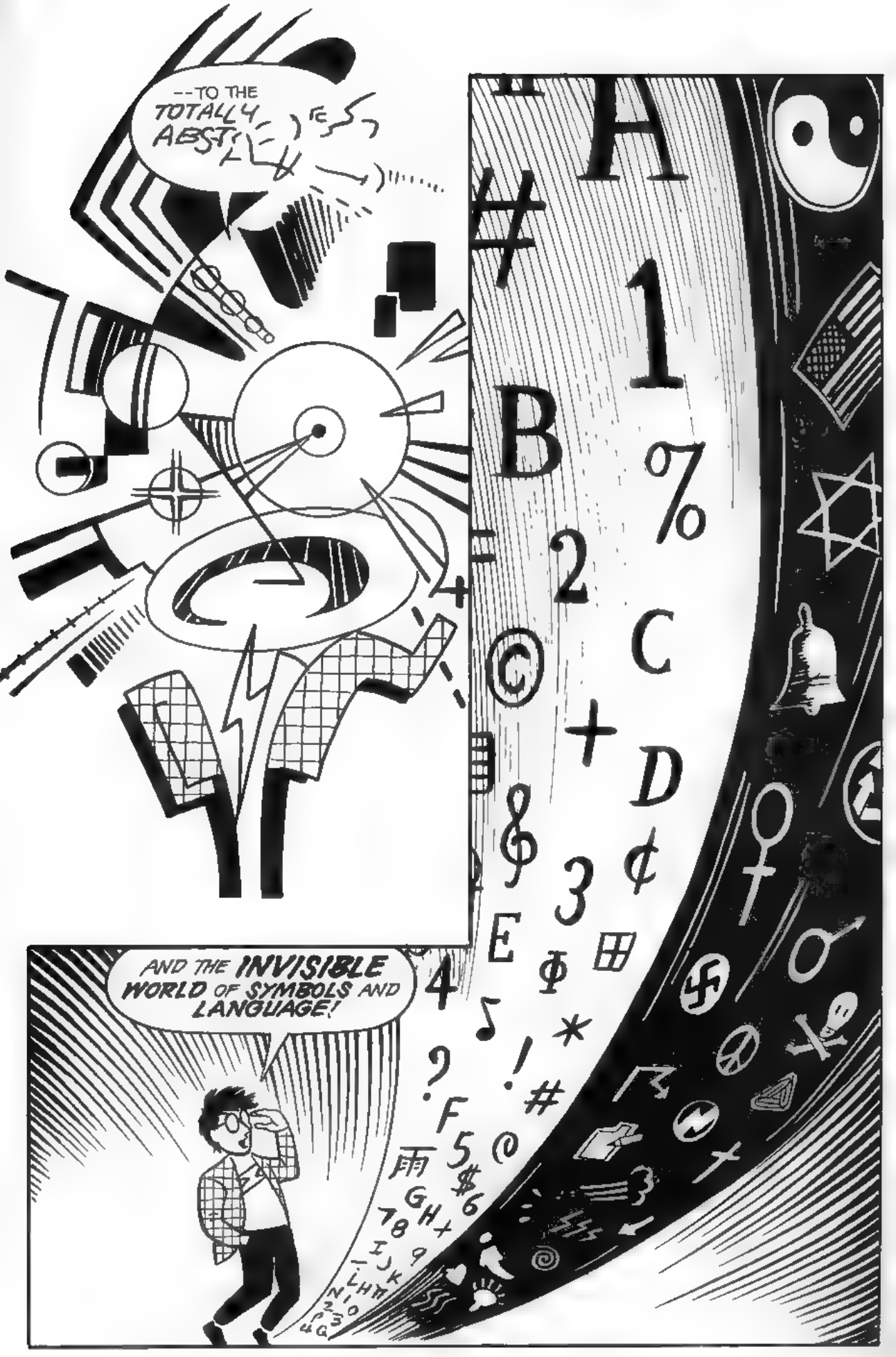
*SEE PAGE 216 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

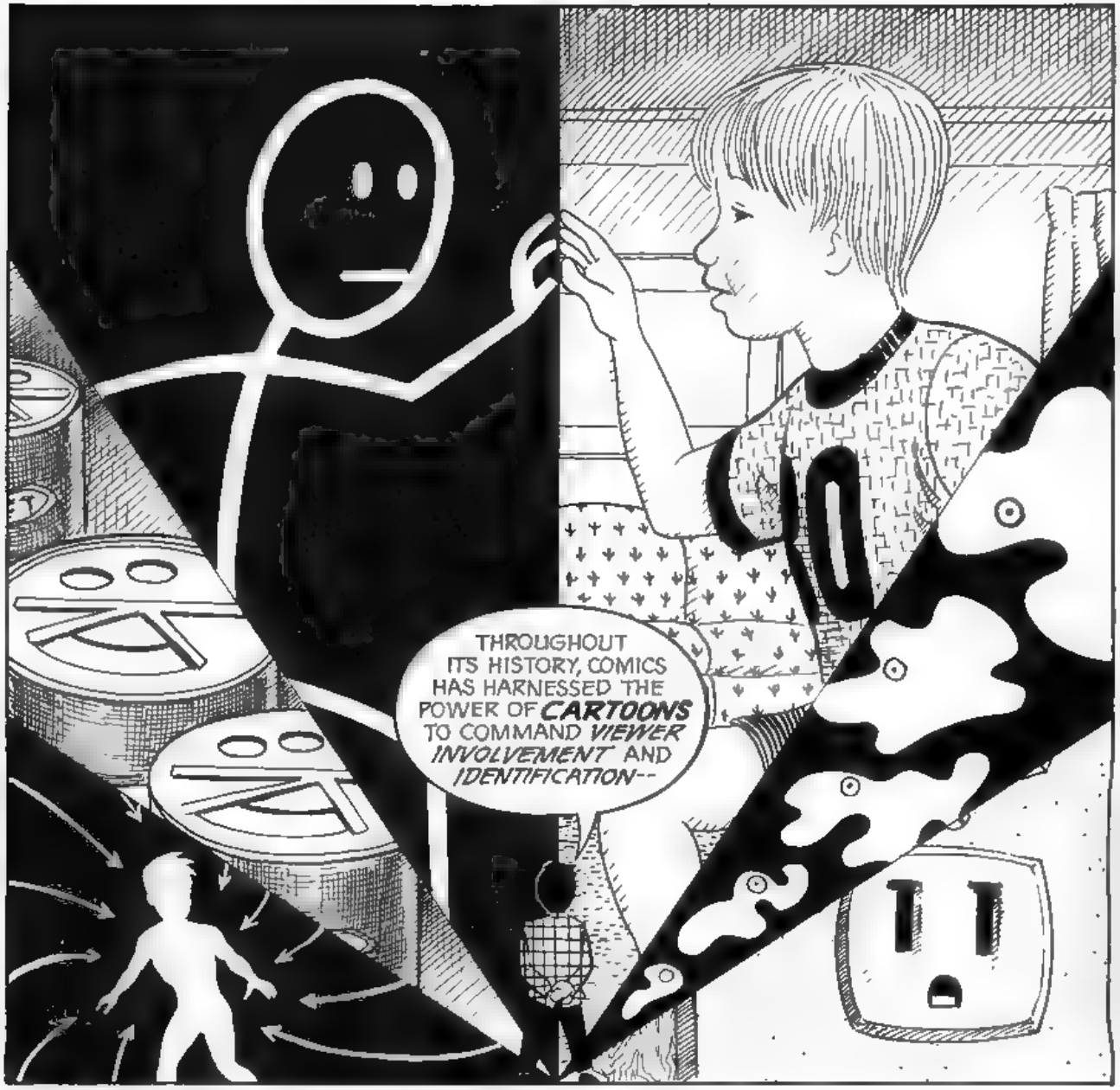
THROUGH THE WORKS AND WRITINGS OF THESE NEGLECTED MASTERS, WE SEE THE FIRST GLIMPSES OF COMICS' LIMITLESS POTENTIAL AS AN ART FORM--
"...the picture-story, which critics disregard and scholars scarcely notice, has had great influence at all times, perhaps even more than written literature."
Rudolphe Topffer
1845
--AND THE ATTITUDES THAT WERE TO OBSCURE THAT POTENTIAL FOR MANY YEARS TO COME!
"...in addition, the picture-story appeals mainly to children and the lower classes..."
Rudolphe Topffer
1845
TRANSLATION BY E. WIESE.
...ATTITUDES WHICH HAVE ALLOWED SOME OF MODERN COMICS' MOST PROMISING ARTISTS TO BE SEGREGATED FROM THEIR MUCH-MALIGNED COUSINS.
ELEVATED BEYOND THEIR HERITAGE BY A CHANGE OF NAME!
HEH-HEH!
SNAP!
GRRRRR..

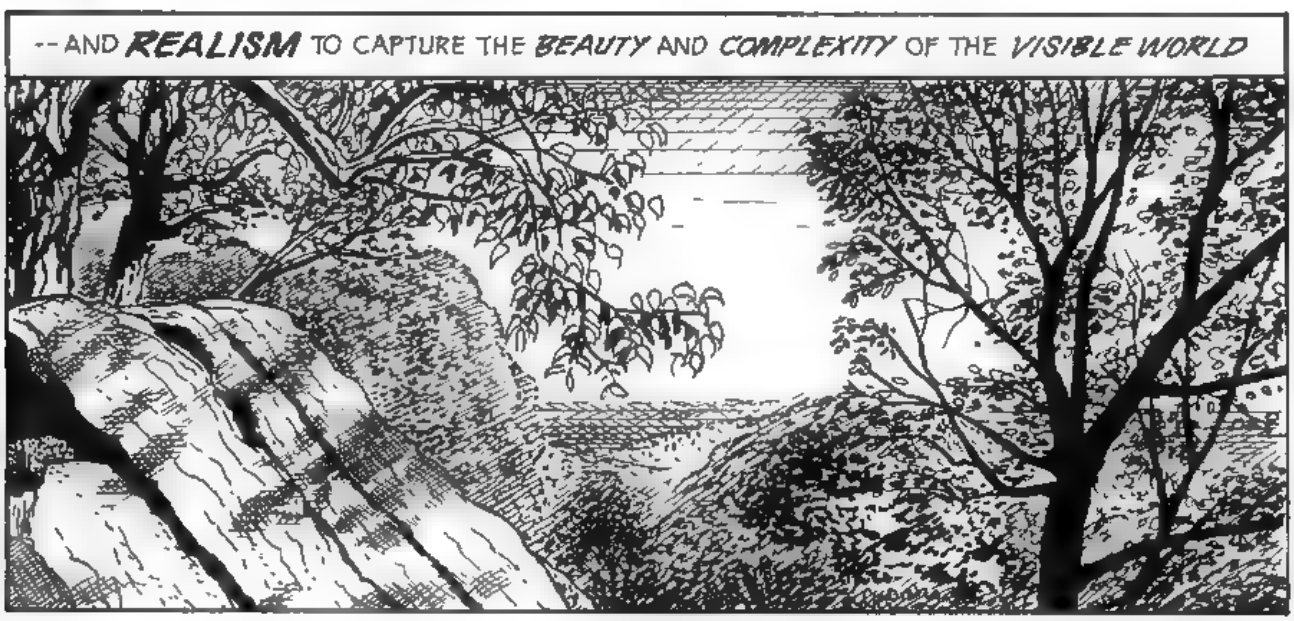
SEE PAGE 218 FOR COPYRIGHT INFORMATION.

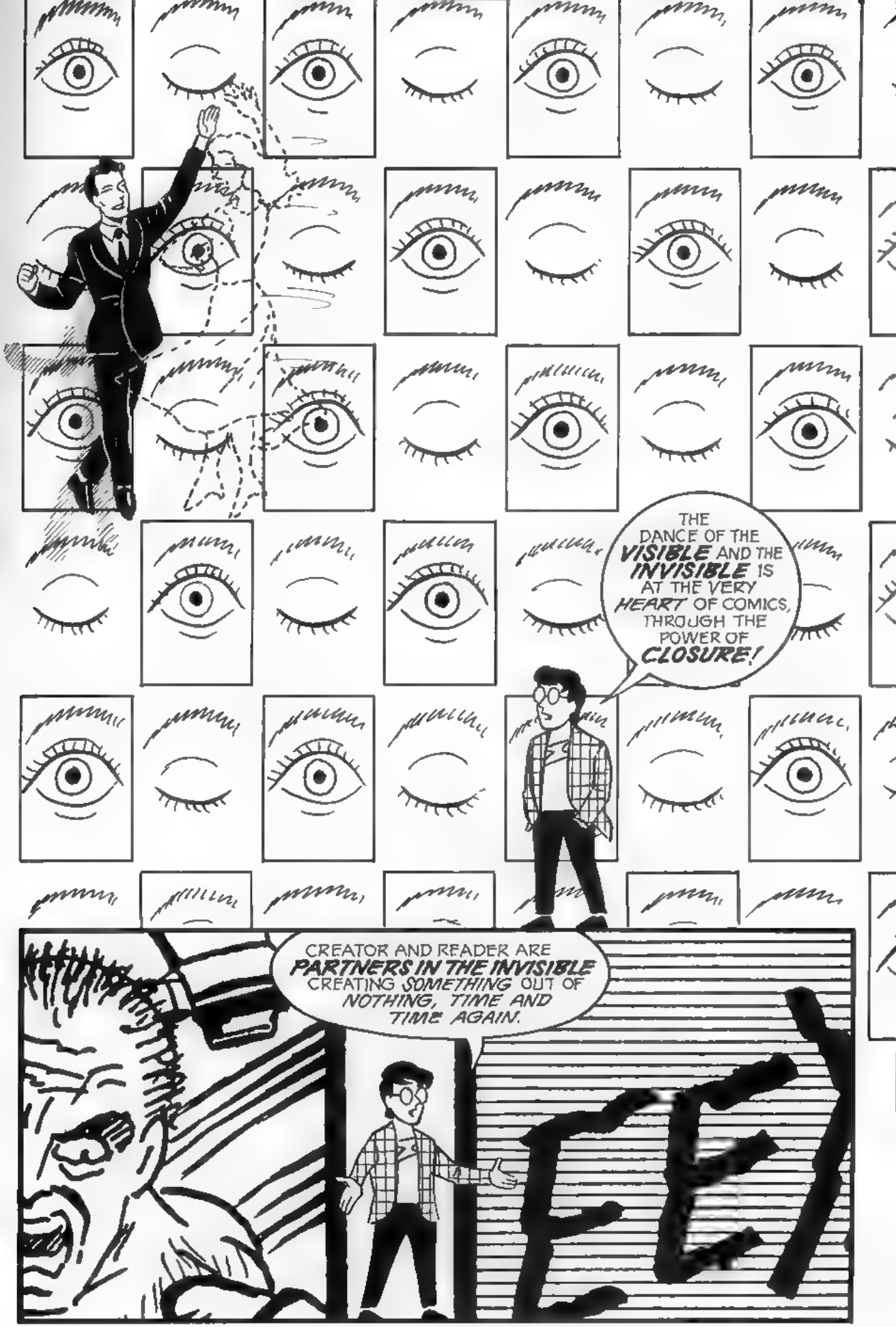

COMICS IS A SIGHT-BASED MEDIUM.
THE WHOLE WORLD OF VISUAL ICONOGRAPHY IS AT THE DISPOSAL OF COMICS CREATORS!
FACE
TWO EYES
ONE MOUTH
ONE NOSE
Thy youth's proud livery, so gaz'd on now...

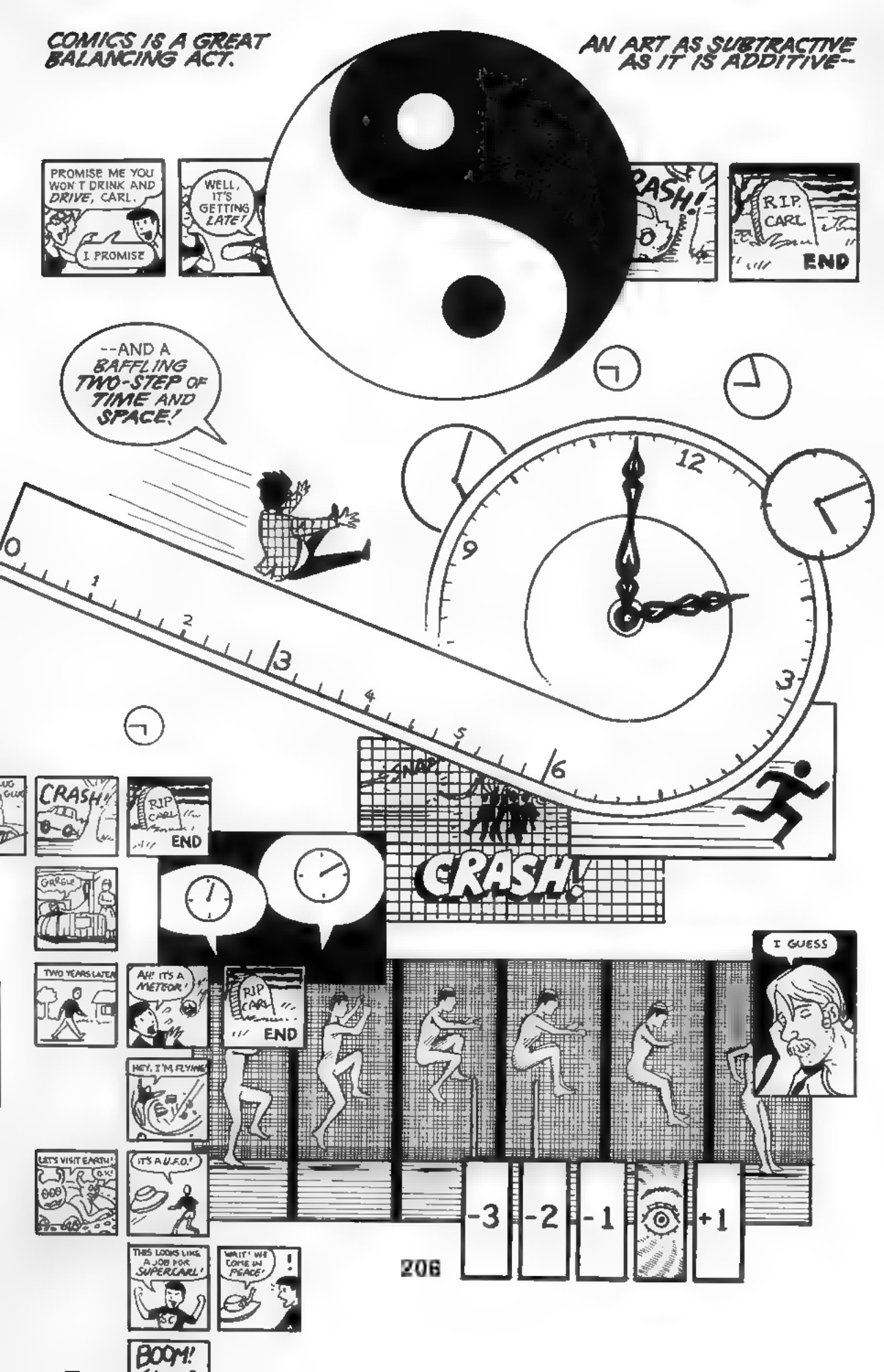

INCLUDING THE FULL RANGE OF PICTORIAL STYLES, FROM REALISTIC REPRESENTATIONAL ART TO THE SIMPLEST CARTOONS--


--TO THE TOTALLY ABSTRACT--
AND THE INVISIBLE WORLD OF SYMBOLS AND LANGUAGE!

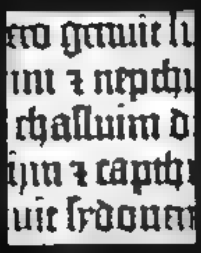

THROUGHOUT ITS HISTORY, COMICS HAS HARNESSED THE POWER OF CARTOONS TO COMMAND VIEWER INVOLVEMENT AND IDENTIFICATION--

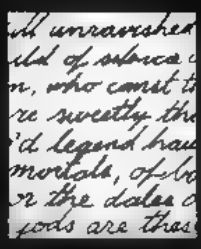

--AND REALISM TO CAPTURE THE BEAUTY AND COMPLEXITY OF THE VISIBLE WORLD


THE DANCE OF THE VISIBLE AND THE INVISIBLE IS AT THE VERY HEART OF COMICS, THROUGH THE POWER OF CLOSURE!
CREATOR AND READER ARE PARTNERS IN THE INVISIBLE CREATING SOMETHING OUT OF NOTHING, TIME AND TIME AGAIN.


COMICS IS A GREAT BALANCING ACT.
AN ART AS SUBTRACTIVE AS IT IS ADDITIVE--
PROMISE ME YOU WON'T DRINK AND DRIVE, CARL.
I PROMISE
WELL, IT'S GETTING LATE!
RASH!
RIP CARL
END
--AND A BAFFLING TWO-STEP OF TIME AND SPACE!
CRASH!
RIP CARL
END
GARGLE
CRASH!
TWO YEARS LATER
AH! IT'S A METEOR!
RIP CARL
END
HEY, I'M FLYING!
I GUESS
LET'S VISIT EARTH!
IT'S A U.F.O.!
THIS LOOKS LIKE A JOB FOR SUPERCARL!
WAIT! WE COME IN PEACE!
BOOM!
-3
-2
-1
+1

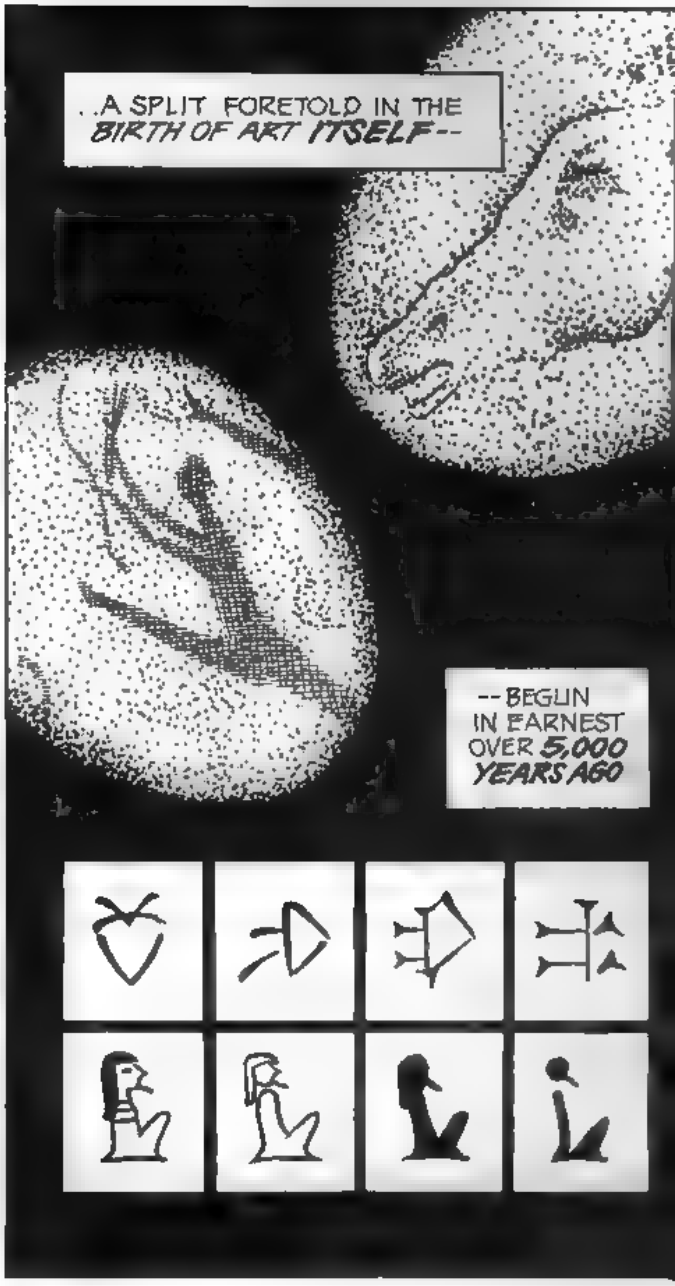
BUT NOWHERE IS THE BALANCE BETWEEN THE *VISIBLE* AND THE *INVISIBLE* MORE CONSPICUOUS THAN IN *PICTURES* AND *WORDS*...





FACE

. .A SPLIT FORETOLD IN THE *BIRTH OF ART ITSELF*--

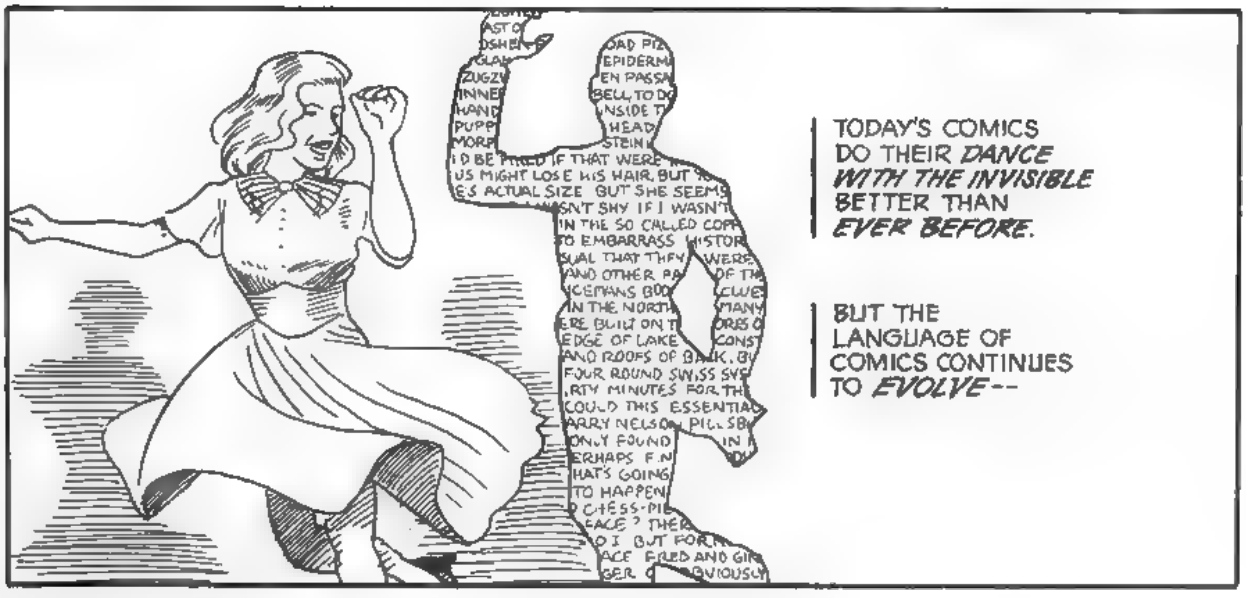


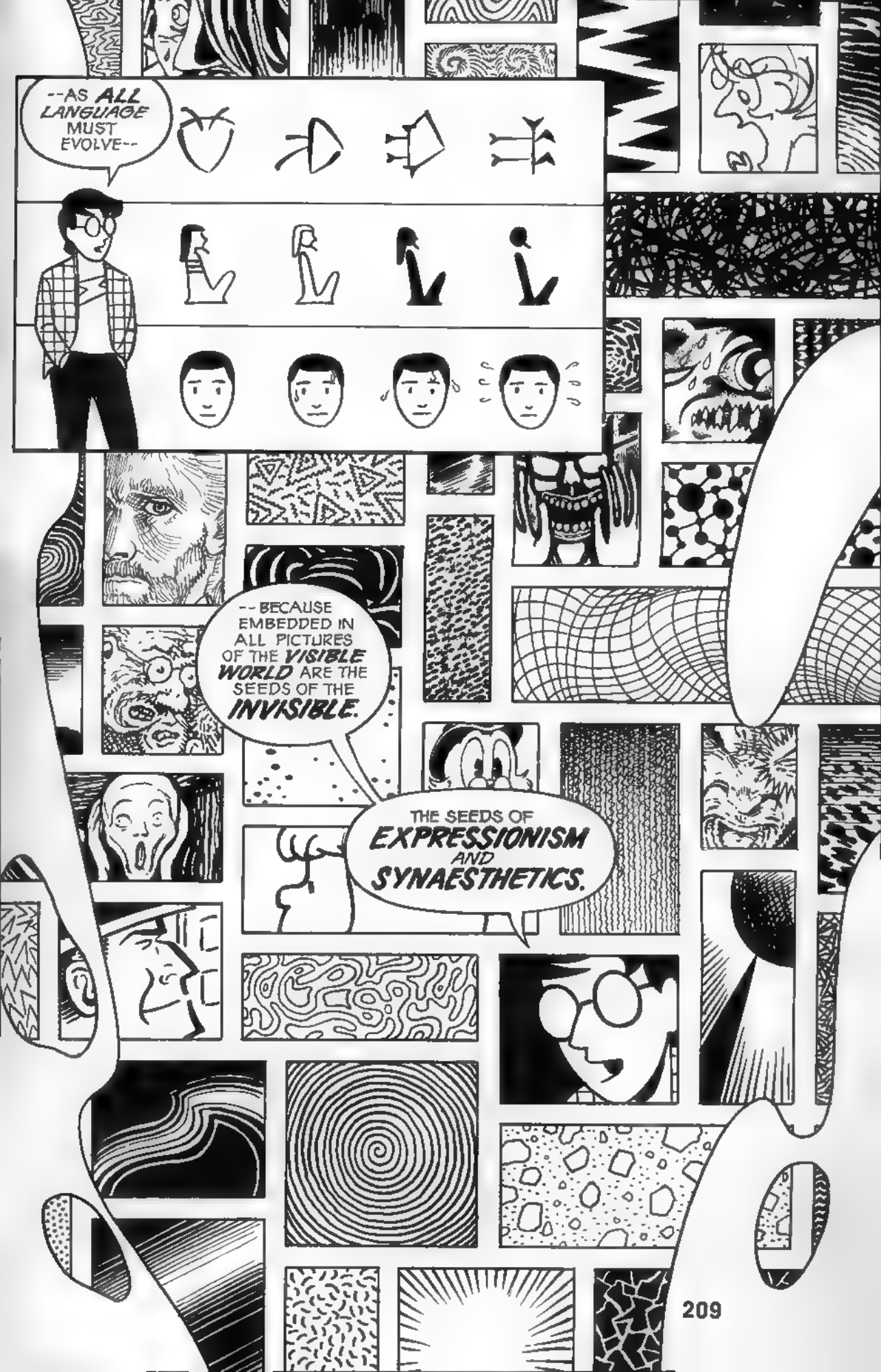
--BEGUN IN EARNEST OVER *5,000 YEARS AGO*



--AND GROWN *WIDER AND WIDER* FOR *CENTURIES* UNTIL EVENTUALLY, ALL CONNECTION WAS LOST--

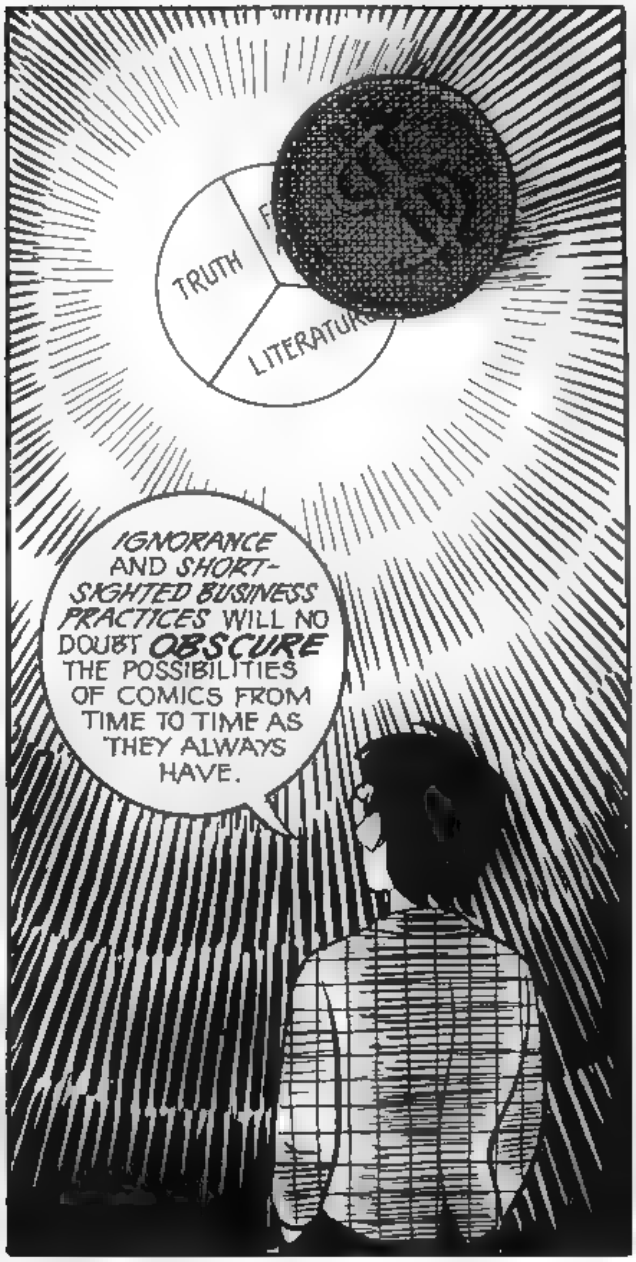
-- AND THEN REDISCOVERED IN THE GREAT MADNESS THAT WAS THE TWENTIETH CENTURY!
People
"YOU'RE OUT!!"
BATMAN RETURNS
ACTION COMICS
SEE PAGE 218 FOR COPYRIGHT INFORMATION.


TODAY'S COMICS DO THEIR DANCE WITH THE INVISIBLE BETTER THAN EVER BEFORE.
BUT THE LANGUAGE OF COMICS CONTINUES TO EVOLVE--


--AS ALL LANGUAGE MUST EVOLVE--
-- BECAUSE EMBEDDED IN ALL PICTURES OF THE VISIBLE WORLD ARE THE SEEDS OF THE INVISIBLE.
THE SEEDS OF EXPRESSIONISM AND SYNAESTHETICS.

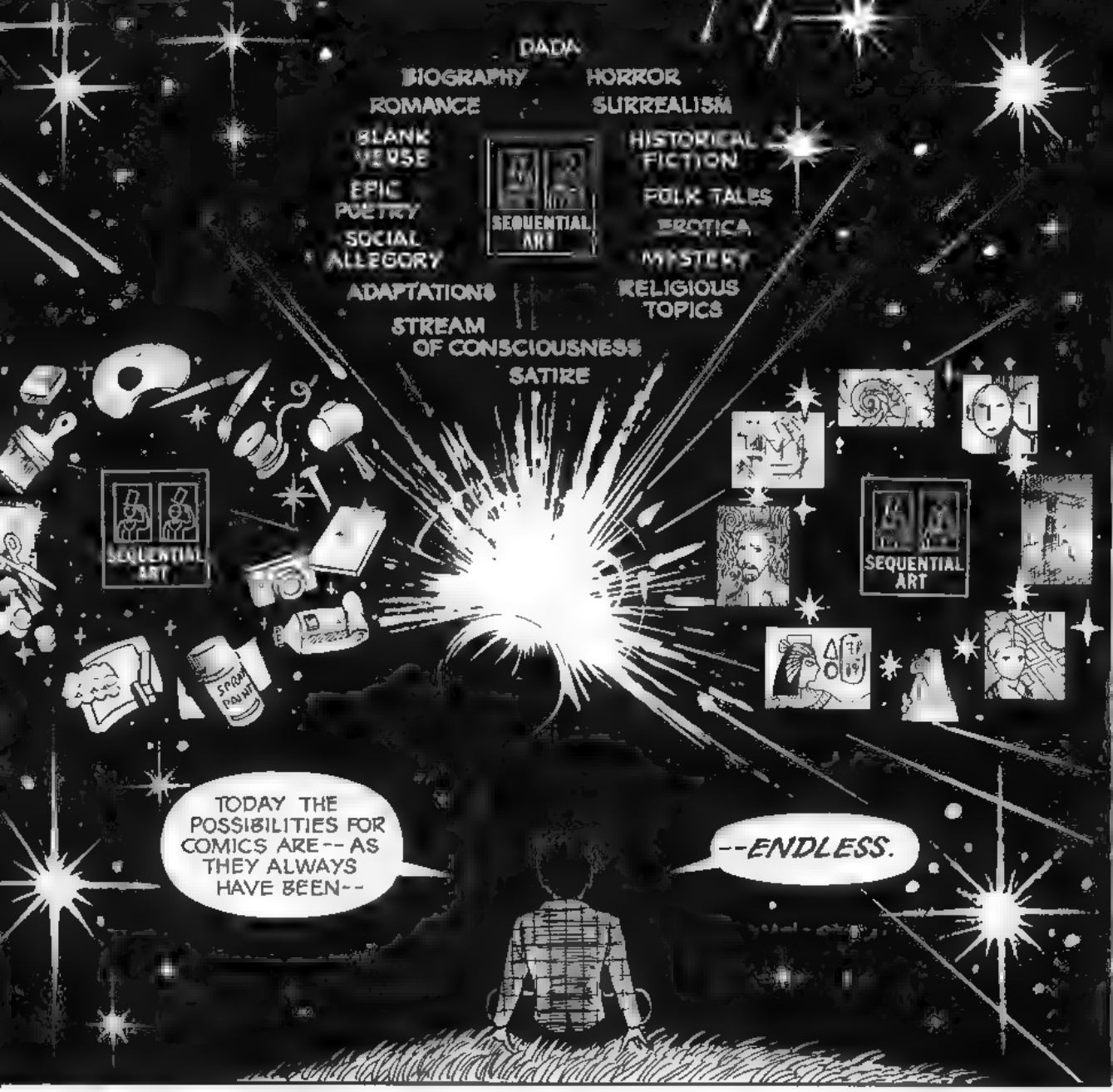
BUT EVOLUTION IS A TRICKY THING. SPECIES EVOLVE DIFFERENTLY IN DIFFERENT CLIMATES.
NORTH AMERICA
EUROPE
SO IT WAS IN JAPAN WHERE COMICS DEVELOPED IN RELATIVE ISOLATION, SPAWNING A HOST OF UNIQUE APPROACHES TO MAKING COMICS.
COLLAGE
EXPRESSIONISM
STORYTELLING
JAPAN
FORMATS
WORD-PICTURE LINKAGE
SUBJECTIVE MOTION
ICONIC CHARACTERS
THE "MASKING" EFFECT

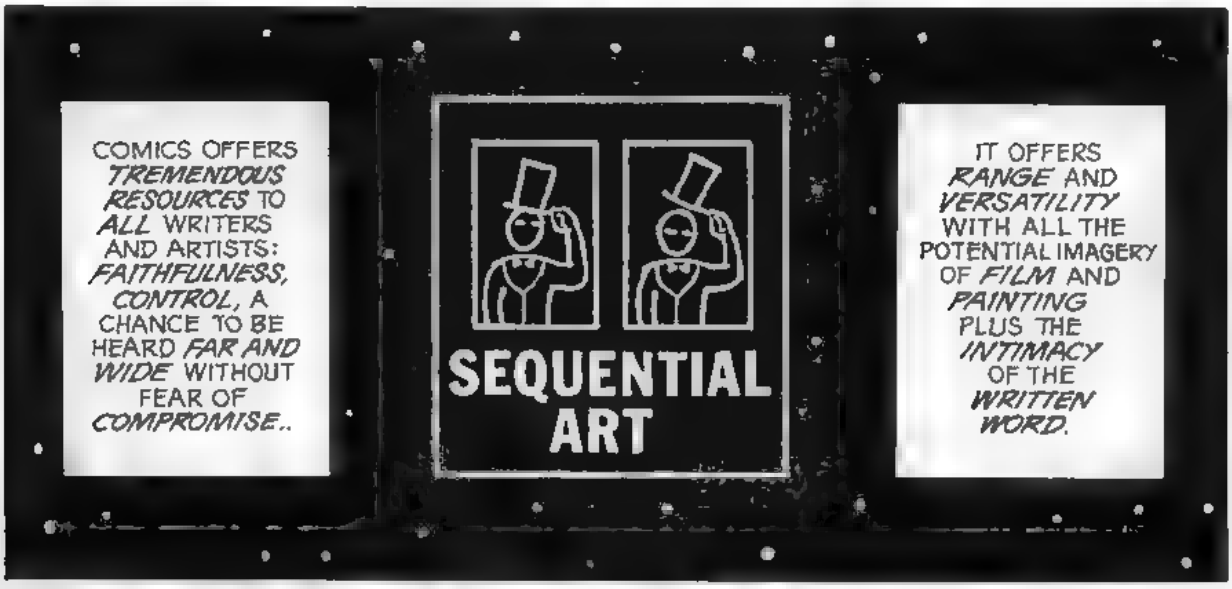
TRUTH
FINE ART
LITERATURE
AS COMICS GROWS INTO THE NEXT CENTURY, CREATORS WILL ASPIRE TO MANY HIGHER GOALS THAN APPEALING TO THE "LOWEST COMMON DENOMINATOR."


TRUTH
IGNORANCE AND SHORT-SIGHTED BUSINESS PRACTICES WILL NO DOUBT OBSCURE THE POSSIBILITIES OF COMICS FROM TIME TO TIME AS THEY ALWAYS HAVE.

BUT THE TRUTH ABOUT COMICS CAN'T STAY HIDDEN FROM VIEW FOREVER AND SOONER OR LATER-

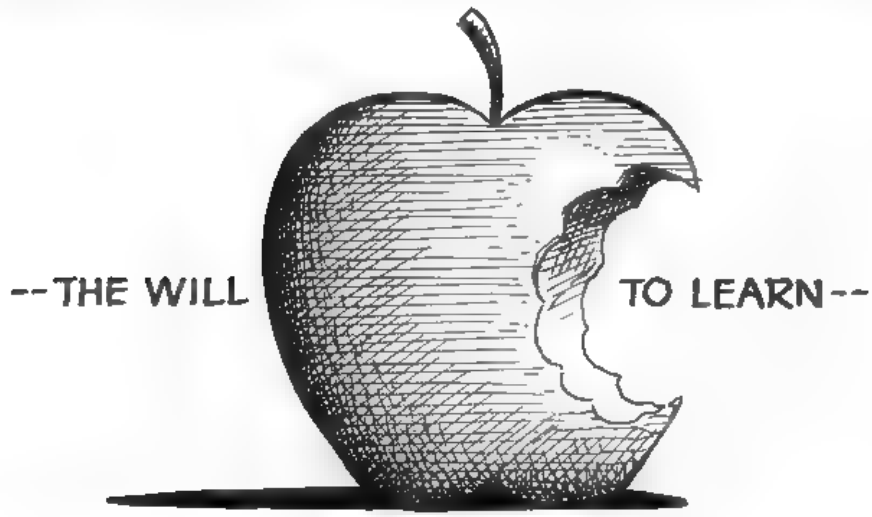
--THE TRUTH WILL SHINE THROUGH!

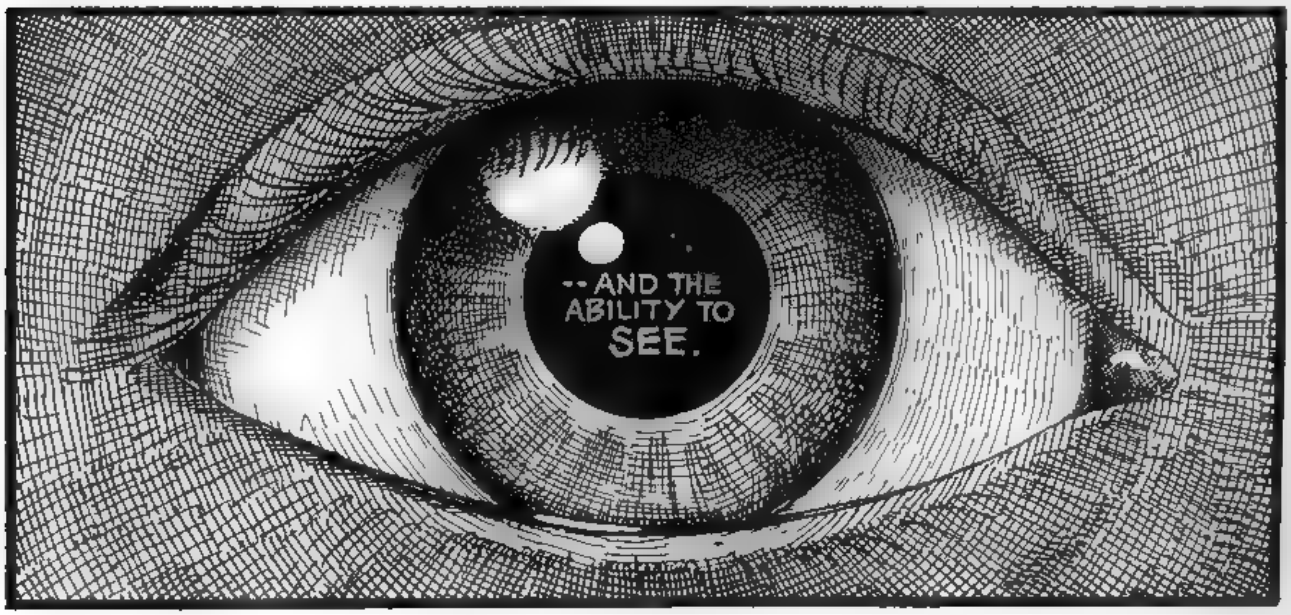

DADA
BIOGRAPHY
HORROR
ROMANCE
SURREALISM
BLANK VERSE
HISTORICAL FICTION
EPIC POETRY
FOLK TALES
SEQUENTIAL ART
EROTICA
SOCIAL ALLEGORY
MYSTERY
ADAPTATIONS
RELIGIOUS TOPICS
STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS
SATIRE
SEQUENTIAL ART
SEQUENTIAL ART
SPRAY PAINT
TODAY THE POSSIBILITIES FOR COMICS ARE-- AS THEY ALWAYS HAVE BEEN--
--ENDLESS.

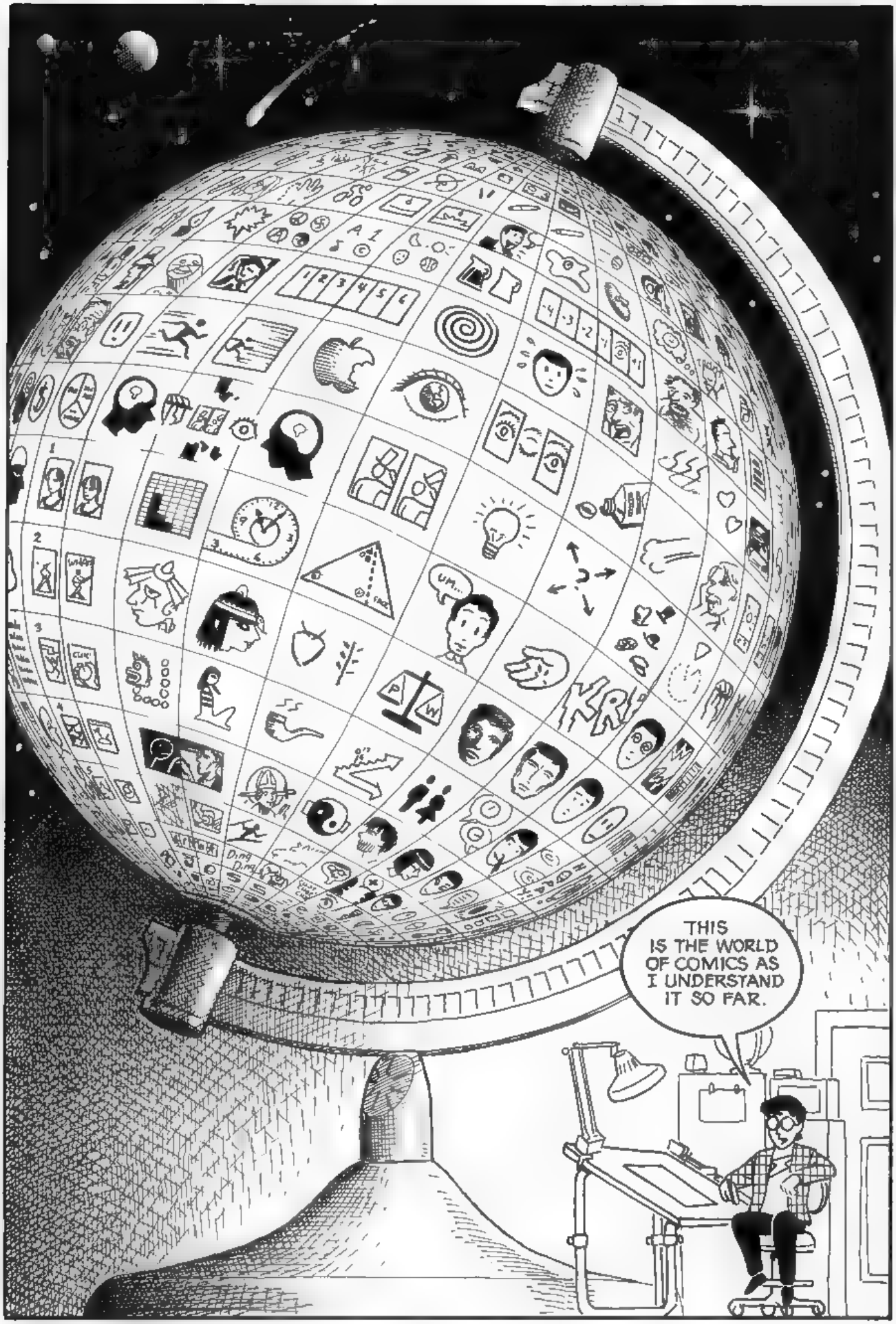

COMICS OFFERS *TREMENDOUS RESOURCES* TO *ALL* WRITERS AND ARTISTS: *FAITHFULNESS, CONTROL,* A CHANCE TO BE HEARD *FAR AND WIDE* WITHOUT FEAR OF *COMPROMISE*..
SEQUENTIAL ART
IT OFFERS *RANGE* AND *VERSATILITY* WITH ALL THE POTENTIAL IMAGERY OF *FILM* AND *PAINTING* PLUS THE *INTIMACY* OF THE *WRITTEN WORD*.

AND ALL THAT'S NEEDED IS THE DESIRE TO BE HEARD--

1 2 3 4 5 6




UM...
THIS IS THE WORLD OF COMICS AS I UNDERSTAND IT SO FAR.

I'VE LEARNED A LOT ABOUT COMICS SINCE BEGINNING THIS PROJECT AND I KNOW I HAVE A LOT LEFT TO LEARN.
I HOPE YOU'LL ALL CONSIDER EXPLORING -- OR CONTINUING TO EXPLORE -- COMICS ON YOUR OWN!
HOWEVER YOU EXPERIENCE COMICS -- AS READER, CREATOR OR BUSINESSPERSON -- THERE ARE A MILLION AND ONE WAYS YOU CAN HELP COMICS TO GROW INTO THE NEXT CENTURY.
THINK ABOUT IT.
AND THANKS FOR LISTENING.
HMM?
OH, WOW, DID I TAKE THAT LONG? I'M SORRY. I BETTER LET YOU GO!
BACK TO THE OLD DRAWING BOARD!
AT LEAST YOU'RE NOT MARRIED TO HIM. I GET THIS ALL THE TIME!
'92

## Selected Bibliography.

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Eisner, Will: *Comics and Sequential Art* (Princeton, Wi: Kitchen Sink Press, Inc., 1992).

Kunzle, David: *The Early Comic Strip* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).

McLuhan, Marshall: *Understanding Media* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1964).

Schwartz, Tony: *Media: The Second God* (New York: Anchor Books, 1983).

Wiese, E., editor, translator: *Enter: The Comics--Rodolphe Topffer's Essay on Physiognomy and the True Story of Monsieur Crepin* (Lincoln, Ne: University of Nebraska Press, 1965).

Special note: Kunzle's book (see above) has gone virtually unnoticed by the comics community but is an enormously important work, covering nearly 400 years of forgotten European comics. Check it out!

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Page 12: To the Heart of the Storm © Will Eisner.

Page 24: The Original painting "The Treachery of Images" by Rene Magritte resides at The Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Our thanks to the museum for allowing us to imitate the image.

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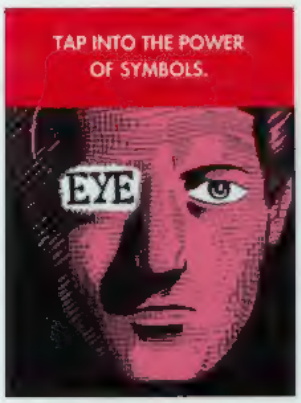

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